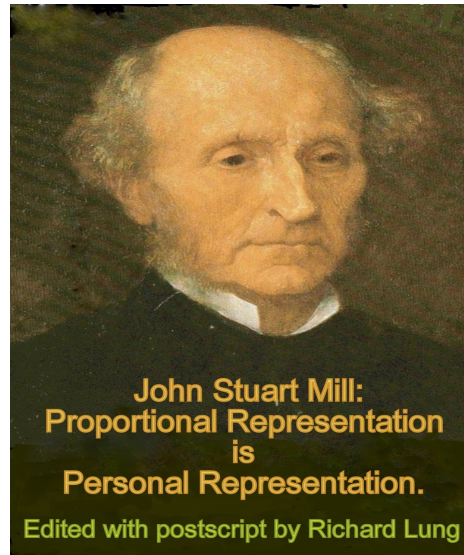


**John Stuart Mill:
Proportional Representation
is
Personal Representation.**

Edited with postscript by Richard Lung



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John Stuart Mill: Proportional Representation is Personal Representation.

"...I made the Bill an occasion for bringing the two great improvements which remain to be made in Representative Government, formally before the House and the nation. One of them was Personal, or, as it is called with equal propriety, Proportional Representation. I brought this under the consideration of the House, by an expository and argumentative speech on Mr. Hare's plan;...

This assertion of my opinions on Personal Representation cannot be credited with any considerable or visible amount of practical result. It was otherwise with the other motion which I made in the form of an amendment to the Reform Bill, and which was by far the most important, perhaps the only really important, public service I performed in the capacity of a Member of Parliament: a motion to strike out the words which were understood to limit the electoral franchise to males, and thereby to admit to the suffrage...women..."

John Stuart Mill: Autobiography.

"...we gladly return to the continuous eloquence, to the vigorous reasoning, to the moderate prognostications, to the demonstrated theories, of the generous and solid mind which Europe has just lost, who brought honour to England, and whose place none can fill."

A History of English Literature: Hippolyte Taine, 1873.

JOHN STUART MILL, TEACHER OF THE PEOPLE

from: Bygones Worth Remembering, Vol. 1 (of 2) chapter xxi & xxii.

(New York E. P. Dutton And Company. 1905) by

George Jacob Holyoake.

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One reason for commencing with the remark that John Stuart Mill was born on May 20, 1806, at No. 13, Rodney Street, Islington, London, is to notify the coincidence that Gladstone, another man of contemporaneous distinction, was born in Rodney Street, Liverpool, three years later. Rodney Street, London, where Mill was born, was a small, narrow, second-rate, odd, out-of-the-way suburban thoroughfare. But in those days Islington had the characteristics of a rural retreat A little above this Rodney Street, in what is now known as the Pentonville Road, stood the "Angel," a favourite hostelry, where Thomas Paine wrote part of one of his famous books, near the period of Mill's birth.

The familiar books concerning J. S. Mill,* treat mainly of his eminence as a thinker. *Notably those of Professor A. Bain and Mr. Courtney.

I concern myself with those personal characteristics which won for him the regard and honour of the insurgent industrial classes — insurgent, not in the sense of physical rebellion against authority, but

of intellectual rebellion against error, social inferiority and insufficiency of means. Mill regarded the press as the fortress of freedom. All his life he gave money to establish such defences, and left the copyright of his works to Mr. John Morley, to be applied in aid of publications open to the expression of all reasoned opinion, having articles signed by the names of the writers. Mr. Mill was the first who made provision for the expression of unfriended truth. It would be a surprising biography which recorded the causes he aided and the persons whom he helped. He was not one of those philosophers, "selfish, cold and wise," who, fortunate and satisfied with their own emancipation from error, leave others to perish in their ignorance. Mill helped them, as did Place, Bentham, Grote, Roebuck, Molesworth, and other leaders of the great Utilitarian party. For ten years I knew Mr. Mill to receive and write letters of suggestion from the India House. He would see any one, at any hour, interested in the progress of the people. As Mr. John Morley has said in the Fortnightly Review, "It was easier for a workman than for a princess to obtain access to him."

Like Samuel Morley, he took trouble to aid honest endeavour, often irrespective of agreement with it.

A pamphlet by me on the "Liberal Situation" in 1865* [* It was in the form of a letter addressed to Joseph Cowen.] being sent to Mr. Mill, he wrote me the following letter:—

"Avignon,

"April 28, 1865.

"Dear Sir, — I have received your pamphlet (the 'Liberal Situation') which I think is one of the best of your writings, and well calculated to stir up the thinking minds among the working classes to larger views of political questions. So far as I am myself concerned I cannot but

be pleased to find you in sympathy with some of the most generally unpopular of my political notions. For my own part, I attach for the present more importance to representation of minorities, and especially to Mr. Hares plan, combined with opening the suffrage to women, than to the plural voting which, in the form proposed by Mr. Buxton, of attaching the plurality of votes directly to property, I have always thoroughly repudiated. But I think what you say of it likely to be very useful by impressing on the working people that it is no degradation to them to consider some people's votes of more value than others. I would always (as you do) couple with the plurality the condition of its being accessible to any one, however poor, who proves that he can come up to a certain standard of knowledge. — I am, yours truly,

"J. S. Mill.

"G. J. Holyoake."

One night when a great Reform League meeting was held in the Agricultural Hall, Islington, I accompanied him from the House of Commons to it. There were rumours of danger in attending it. This did not deter him. The meeting itself was ill spoken of by the press — still he went. The crowd about the place made it perilous for one so fragile-looking as he, to force a way in. He never hesitated to try it. When we arrived on the thronged platform, it was a struggle to get to the front. The vast amphitheatre, with its distant lights and dense crowds — the horsepit presenting a valley of faces, the higher ground hills of men, the iron rafters overhead were alive with hearers who had climbed there — was a strange Miltonic scene. No sooner did the stout voice of Manton — which alone all could hear — announce the arrival of Mr. Mill than every man was silent; though few would catch the low, wise, brave words he uttered. Afterwards I

returned to the House of Commons with him, he being interested in an expected division.

The Islington meeting that night had been denounced as illegal. He went to justify the right of public meeting by his presence, and to share the responsibility of those who convened it. What man eminent as a thinker, save he, or Mr. John Morley, would incur the odium, peril, and discomfort of attending, for such a purpose, a workman's meeting such as that?

The first time he made a speech at a public meeting was at the Whittington Club, before a gathering of co-operators. I asked him to address them. I was as glad as surprised when he consented. Had it not been for the presence of women taking interest in co-operative economy, he probably had not spoken then. In a sentence he defined the higher co-operation. He never spoke in vain.

When in business in Fleet Street I signed bills for the convenience of a city friend, who, like William Ellis — Mill's early associate — was a munificent supporter of progressive endeavour. By putting my name on his bills I incurred a liability beyond my means of meeting. My more than imprudence was indefensible because it involved the business in which the money of others was invested. Learning that my resources fell short by £70 of the amount for which I was answerable, Mr. Mill sent me the £70 from himself and a friend. When the bills were repaid me from the estate of him for whom I had signed them, I sent the £70 to Mr. Mill, who returned me half as a gift, on the condition that I did not sign another bill, which I never did, unless I was able to pay it if my friend did not, and I was willing to pay it if he could not.

Mr. Mill had quoted portions of my "History of the Rochdale Pioneers," in his "Political Economy," which was a great advantage to a cause whose success I much desired. In many ways I was much

indebted to his friendship, and have never changed in my regard for him. Yet this did not involve spontaneous acquiescence in all his views. Upon the ballot I dissented from him. It seemed to me a just condition that the people should be, for one minute in seven years, free to vote for their political masters (as members of Parliament are) without control, intimidation, or fear of resentment Mr. Bright himself and Mr. Berkeley were impressed by my view as stated to a meeting of the Reform League. Mill thought it conduced to manliness that the elector should withstand adverse influences at whatever peril — which assumed the universal existence of a heroic spirit of self-sacrifice. Since the elector by his vote subjects his fellow-citizens, it may be, to perilous mastership, Mill inferred every man had a right to know from whose hand came the blessing or the blow. There is still force in Mill's view which commands respect. On the other hand, secret voting is not without its disadvantages. The citizen may be surrounded by disguised adversaries. The fair-seeming dissembler he trusts may stab him at the poll. The independence given by the ballot may betray the State, and the traitors be shielded from responsibility. The secret vote also rests on a vast assumption — that of the universal paramountcy of conscience and honesty in electors — which paramountcy is as scarce as political heroism. Those who so trust the people incur the greater and ceaseless responsibility of educating them in political honour. They who have shown their trust in the people, alone have the right of claiming their fidelity. Mr. Mill was foremost in teaching the duty of independent thought, and, to do him justice, my dissent from a principle he had come to hold strongly, made no difference in his friendship. He was once a believer in the ballot himself.

Mr. Mill was an instance which shows that even the virtues of a philosopher need, as in lesser men, good sense to take care of them, lest the operation of lofty qualities compromise others. His unguarded intrepidity in defence of the right cost him his seat for

Westminster. Things were going well for him, on his second candidature, when one morning it appeared in the newspapers that he had sent £10 to promote the election of Mr. Bradlaugh. That £10 was worth £10,000 to his Tory opponent, and cost Mill's own committee the loss of £3,000, which was contributed to promote his election. When I was a candidate in the Tower Hamlets, Mr. Mill sent a similar sum to promote my election; but I prohibited the publication of an intrepid act of generosity, which might prove costly to Mr. Mill. At his first election Dean Stanley nobly urged Christian electors to vote for Mr. Mill; but at the second election, when it became known that Mr. Mill was subscribing to bring an Atheist into Parliament, most Christians were persuaded Mr. Mill was himself an Atheist, and only the nobler sort would vote for him again. It was right and honourable in Mr. Mill to stand by his opinion, that an Atheist had as much right as a Christian to be in Parliament, and that ecclesiastical heresy was no disqualification for public or Parliamentary service. To maintain your opinions at your own cost is one thing, but to proclaim them at the cost of others, without regard to time, consent or circumstance, is quite a different matter.

Mr. Mill had refused on principle to contribute to the expense of his own election, on the ground that a candidate should not be called upon to pay for his own election to a place of public service, I thought it was perfectly consistent that he should contribute to the election of others. But his committee could not convert the electorate to this view. There is nothing so difficult as the election of a philosopher. Mr. Mill was in favour of the civil equality of all opinions, but it did not follow that he shared all opinions himself. But the electors could not be made to see this after the £10 sent to Northampton became known, and England saw the most famous borough in the land handed over for unknown years to a Tory bookseller, without personal distinction of his own, and a book writer

of the highest order rejected by the electors in favour of a mere bookseller.

Mr. Mill's father, openly advocating the limitation of families in the interest of the poor, bequeathed to his son a heritage of disadvantage — of liability to frenzied imputation. No man is to be held responsible save for what he himself says and what he himself does. No man is answerable, or ought to be held answerable, for the construction others put upon his conduct, or for their inference as to his opinions. No writer ever guarded his words and conduct more assiduously than J. S. Mill. Yet few have been more misrepresented by theological and Conservative writers. Upon the question of "limitation of families," Mr. Mill never wrote other or more than this:—

"No prudent man contracts matrimony before he is in a condition which gives him an assured means of living, and no married man has a greater number of children than he can properly bring up. Whenever this family has been formed, justice and humanity require that he should impose on himself the same restraint which is submitted to by the unmarried."*

* "Principles of Political Economy," Book ii.

Further instruction of the people upon this subject J. S. Mill might not deprecate, but he never gave it. He never went so far as Jowett, who wrote: "That the most important influences on human life should be wholly left to chance, or shrouded in mystery, and instead of being disciplined or understood, should be required to conform to an external standard of propriety, cannot be regarded by the philosopher as a safe or satisfactory condition of human things."*

* "Dialogues of Plato." Introduction to "Republic," vol. ii.

Mill's views, or supposed views, naturally excited the attention of wits. Moore's amusing exaggeration, which, like American humour, was devoid of truth, yet had no malice in it, was:—

"There are two Mr. Mills, too, whom those who like reading
What's vastly unreadable, call very clever;
And whereas Mill senior makes war on good breeding,
Mill junior makes war on all breeding whatever."

The way in which opinions were invented for Mill is shown in the instance of the London Debating Club (1826-1830), which was attended by a set of young men who professed ultra opinions. Mr. J. A. Roebuck was one. It was rumoured that at a meeting at which Mr. Mill was present, a pamphlet was discussed entitled, "What is Love?" attributed to a man of some note in his day, and of unimpeachable character in private life. Mr. Mill might have been present without knowledge of the subject to be brought forward, and may have been a listener without choice.

But in those days (and down to a much later period) the conventional fallacy was in full vogue — that civility to an opponent implied a secret similarity of opinion. Courtesy was regarded as complicity with the beliefs of those to whom it was shown. He who was present at an unconventional assembly was held to assent to what took place there — though neither a member, nor speaker, nor partisan.

JOHN STUART MILL, TEACHER OF THE PEOPLE

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Mill was so entirely serious in his pursuit of truth, and entirely convinced of the advantages of its publicity, that he readily risked conventional consequences on that account. He held it to be desirable that those who had important convictions, should be free to make them known, and even be encouraged to do so. In thinking this he was in no way compromised by, nor had he any complicity with, the convictions of others. But this did not prevent him being made answerable for them, as in the case of the distribution of papers sent to him by friends in his company. A copy of it came into my possession which assuredly he did not write, and the terms of which he could never have approved, had they been submitted to him. On one occasion he sent to me a passionate repudiation of concurrence or recommendation in any form, of methods imputed to him.

These eccentricities of imputation, supposed to have died by time, were found to be alive at Mills death.

The chief resurrectionist was one Abraham Hayward, known as a teller of salacious stories at the Athenaeum. He was a man of many gifts, who wrote with a bright, but by no means fastidious, pen. In some unexplained, inconsistent, and inexplicable way, Mr. Gladstone was on friendly terms with him. No sooner was Mill dead, and illustrious appreciators of the great thinker were meditating some memorial to his honour, than Mr. Hayward sent an article to the Times, suggesting intrinsic immorality in his opinions. He also sent

out letters privately to deter eminent friends of Mill from giving their names to the memorial committee. He sent one to Mr. Stopford Brooke, upon whom it had no influence. He sent one to Mr. Gladstone, upon whom it had, and who, in consequence, declined to join the committee.

Hayward was, in his day, the lingo of literature, and abused the confiding nature of our noble Moor.* [* My little book, "John Stuart Mill, as the Working Classes Knew Him," was written to show Mr. Gladstone the answer that could be given to Hayward.] Yet, when Mr. Mill lost his seat for Westminster, Mr. Gladstone had written these great words: "We all know Mr. Mill's intellectual eminence before he entered Parliament. What his conduct principally disclosed to me was his singular moral elevation. Of all the motives, stings and stimulants that reach men through their egotism in Parliament, no part could move or even touch him. His conduct and his language were in this respect a sermon. For the sake of the House of Commons, I rejoiced in his advent and deplored his disappearance. He did us all good, and in whatever party, in whatever form of opinion, I sorrowfully confess that such men are rare."

There was no tongue in the House of Commons more bitter, venomous, or disparaging of the people than that of Lord Robert Cecil, afterwards Lord Salisbury; yet I record to his honour he subscribed £50 towards the memorial to Mr. Mill. One of the three first persons who gave £50 was Mr. Walter Morrison. The Duke of Argyll, the Earl of Derby, the Duke of Devonshire, Sir Charles and Lady Dilke, Mr. and Mrs. P. A. Taylor were also among the subscribers of £50 each. Among those who gave large but lesser sums were Mr. Herbert Spencer, Stopford Brooke, Leonard H. Courtney, Frederic Harrison, G. H. Lewes, W. E. H. Lecky. Sir John Lubbock, G. Croome Robertson, Lord Rosebery, Earl Russell, Professor Tyndall, and Professor Huxley. So Mr. Mill had his

monument with honour. It stands on the Thames Embankment, and allures more pilgrims of thought than any other there.

Purity and honour, there is reason to believe, were never absent from Mill's mind or conduct; but trusting to his own personal integrity, he assumed others would recognise it. His admiration of Mrs. Taylor, whom he frequently visited, and subsequently married, was misconstrued — though not by Mr. Taylor, who had full confidence in Mr. Mill's honour. No expression to the contrary on Mr. Taylor's part ever transpired. It might be due to society that Mr. Mill should have been reserved in his regard. But assured of his own rectitude, he trusted to the proud resenting maxim, "Evil be to him who evil thinks," and he resented imputation — whether it came from his relatives or his friends. Any reflection upon him in this respect he treated as an affront to himself, and an imputation upon Mrs. Taylor, which he never forgave. A relative told me after his death, that he never communicated with any of them again who made any remark which bore a sinister interpretation. If ever there was a philosopher who should be counted stainless, it was John Stuart Mill.

In the minds of the Bentham School, population was a province of politics. It would seem incredible to another generation — as it seems to many in this — that a philosopher should incur odium for being of Jowett's opinion, that the most vital information upon the conduct of life should not be withheld from the people. To give it is to incur conventional reprehension; as though it were not a greater crime to be silent while a feeble, half-fed, and ignorant progeny infest the land, to find their way to the hospital, the poor house, or the gaol, than to protest against this recklessness, which establishes penury and slavery in the workman's home. Yet a brutal delicacy and a criminal fastidiousness, calling itself public propriety, is far less reputable than the ethical preference for reasonable foresight and a manlier race.

Mr. Mill's success in Parliament was greater than that of any philosopher who has entered in our time. Unfortunately, very few philosophers go there. The author of "Mark Rutherford" (W. Hale White) writing to me lately, exclaimed: "Oh for one session with Mill and Bright and Cobden in the House! What would you not give to hear Mill's calm voice again? What would you not give to see him apply the plummet of Justice and Reason to the crooked iniquities of the Front Benches? He stands before me now, just against the gangway on the Opposition side, hesitating, pausing even for some seconds occasionally, and yet holding everybody in the House with a kind of grip; for even the most foolish understood more or less dimly that they were listening to something strange, something exalted, spoken from another sphere than that of the professional politician."

Mr. Christie relates that in the London Debating Society, of which Mill was a member when a young man, it used to be said of him in argument, "He passed over his adversary like a ploughshare over a mouse." Certainly many mice arguers heard in Parliament, who made the public think a mountain was in labour, ended their existence with a squeak when Mr. Mill took notice of them.

The operation of the suffrage and the ballot, questions on which Mill expressed judgment, are in the minds of politicians to this day, and many reformers who dissented from him do not conceal their misgivings as to the wisdom of their course. "Misgivings" is a word that may be taken to mean regret, whereas it merely signifies occasion for consideration. The extension of the franchise and the endowment of the ballot have caused misgivings in many who were foremost in demanding them. The wider suffrage has not prevented an odious war in South Africa, and the ballot has sent to the House of Commons a dangerous majority of retrograde members. John Bright distrusted the vote of the residuum. John Stuart Mill equally dreaded the result of withdrawing the vote of the elector from public

scrutiny. I agreed with their apprehensions, but it seemed to me a necessity of progress that the risk should be run. While the Ballot Act was before the House of Lords, I wrote to the Times and other papers, as I have elsewhere related, to say that the Ballot Act would probably give us a Tory government for ten years — which it did. I thought that the elector who had two hundred years of transmitted subjection or intimidation or bribery in his bones, would for some time go on voting as he had done — for others, not for the State. He would not all at once understand that he was free and answerable to the State for his vote. New electors, who had never known the responsibility of voting, would not soon acquire the sense of it. Mr. Mill thought it conduced to manliness for an elector to act in despite of his interest or resentment of his neighbours, his employer, his landlord, or his priest, when his vote became known. At every election there were martyrs on both sides; and it was too much to expect that a mass of voters, politically ignorant, and who had been kept in ignorance, would generally manifest a high spirit, which maintains independence in the face of social peril, which philosophers are not always equal to. No doubt the secrecy of the vote is an immunity to knaves, but it is the sole chance of independence for the average honest man. The danger of committing the fortune of the State to the unchecked votes of the unintelligent was an argument of great power against a secret suffrage. Lord Macaulay, though a Whig of the Whigs, gave an effective answer when he brought forward his famous fool, who declared "he would never go into the water until he had learnt to swim." The people must plunge into the sea of liberty before they can learn to swim in it. They have now been in that sea many years, and not many have learned the art yet. Then was found the truth of Temple Leader's words, that "if the sheep had votes, they would give them all to the butcher." Then when reformers found that the new electors voted largely for those who had always refused them the franchise, the advocates of it often expressed to me their misgivings

as to its wisdom. Lord Sherbrooke (then Robert Lowe) saw clearly that if liberty was to be maintained and extended, the State must educate its masters.

But has this been done? Has not education been impeded? Have not electoral facilities been hampered? Has not the franchise been restricted by onerous conditions, which keep great numbers from having any vote at all? Has not the dual vote been kept up, which enables the wealthy to multiply their votes at will? Before reformers have misgivings concerning the extension of liberty to the masses, they must see that the poor have the same opportunity of reaching the poll as the rich have. George Eliot, who had the Positivist reluctance to see the people act for themselves, wrote: "Ignorant power comes in the end to the same thing as wicked power."* [*"Felix Holt," p 265. Blackwood's stereotyped edition.] But there is this difference in their nature. "Ignorant power" can be instructed, and experience may teach it; but "wicked power" has an evil purpose, intelligently fixed and implacably determined.

Does any reflecting person suppose, that when the vote was given to the mass of the people, they would be at once transmuted into intelligent, calculating, and patient politicians — that their passions would be tamed, and their vices extinguished — that they would forthwith act reasonably? Much of this was true of the thoughtful working men. But for a long time the multitude must remain unchanged until intelligence extends. We have had renewed experience that —

"Religion, empire, vengeance, what you will,
A word's enough to rouse mankind to kill.
Some cunning phrase by fiction caught and spread,
That guilt may reign, and wolves and worms be fed."

But the reformer has one new advantage now. He is no longer scandalised by the excesses of ignorance, nor the perversities of selfishness. Giving the vote has, if we may paraphrase the words of Shakespeare, put into

"Every man's hands
The means to cancel his captivity."

It is no mean thing to have done this.

There is no reason for misgiving here. If the people misuse or neglect to use their power, the fault is their own. There is no one to reproach but themselves.

Abolitionists of slavery may, if supine, feel misgivings at having liberated the negroes from their masters, where they were certain of shelter, subsistence, and protection from assault of others, and exposed them to the malice of their former owners, to be maltreated, murdered at will, lynched with torture on imaginary or uninvestigated accusations. Those who aided the emancipation of the slaves are bound to ceaseless vigilance in defending them. But despite the calamities of liberty, freedom has added an elastic race (who learn the arts of order and of wealth) to the family of mankind, and misgivings are obsolete among those who have achieved the triumphs and share the vigils and duties of progress.

Mr. Mill was essentially a teacher of the people. He wished them to think on their own account — for themselves, and not as others directed them. He did not wish them to disregard the thoughts of those wiser than themselves, but to verify new ideas as far as they could, before assenting to them. He wished them not to take authority for truth, but truth for authority. To this end he taught the people principles which were pathways to the future. He who kept on such paths knew where he was. Herbert Spencer said he had no

wrinkles on his brow because he had discovered the thoroughfares of nature, and was never puzzled as to where they led. Mr. Mill was a chartmaker in logic, in social economy, and in politics. None before him did what he did, and no successor has exceeded him. By his protest against the "subjection of women," he brought half the human race into the province of politics and progress. They have not all appeared there as yet—but they are on the way.

John Stuart Mill and Harriet Taylor.

from: Little Journeys to the Homes of the Great, Vol. 13.

Little Journeys to the Homes of Great Lovers.
Memorial Edition. New York 1916.

Elbert Hubbard

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So this then is the love-story of John Stuart Mill and Harriet Taylor, who first met in the year Eighteen Hundred Thirty. He was twenty-five and a clerk in the East India House. She was twenty-three, and happily married to a man with a double chin.

They saw each other for the first time at Mrs. Taylor's house at a function given in honor of a Right Honorable Nobody from Essex. The Right Honorable has gone down into the dust of forgetfulness, his very name lost to us, like unto that of the man who fired the Alexandrian Library.

All we know is that he served as a pivotal point in the lives of two great people, and then passed on, unwittingly, into the obscurity from whence he came.

On this occasion the Right Honorable read an original paper on an Important Subject. Mrs. Taylor often gave receptions to eminent and learned personages, because her heart was a-hungred to know and to become, and she vainly thought that the society of learned people would satisfy her soul.

She was young. She was also impulsive, vivacious, ambitious. John Stuart Mill says she was rarely beautiful, but she wasn't. Beauty is in the eye of the beholder. All things are comparative, and John Stuart Mill regarded Mrs. Taylor from the first night he saw her as the standard of feminine perfection. All women scaled down as they varied from her. As an actual fact, her features were rather plain, mouth and nose large, cheek-bones in evidence, and one eye was much more open than the other, and this gave people who did not especially like her, excuse for saying that her eyes were not mates. As for John Stuart Mill he used, at times, to refer to the wide-open orb as her "critical eye."

Yet these eyes were lustrous, direct and honest, and tokened the rare quality of mental concentration. Her head was square and long, and had corners. She carried the crown of her head high, and her chin in.

We need not dally with old Mr. Taylor here — for us he was only Mrs. Taylor's husband, a kind of useful marital appendendum. He was a merchant on 'Change, with interests in argosies that plied to Tripoli — successful, busy, absorbed, with a twinge of gout, and a habit of taking naps after dinner with a newspaper over his face. Moreover, he was an Oxford man, and this was his chief recommendation to the eighteen-year-old girl, when she married him four years before. But education to him was now only a reminiscence. He had sloughed the old Greek spirit as a bird molts its feathers, with this difference:

that a bird molts its feathers because it is growing a better crop, while Mr. Taylor wasn't growing anything but a lust after "L. s. d."

Once in two years there was an excursion to Oxford to attend a reunion of a Greek-letter society, and perhaps twice in the winter certain ancient cronies came, drank musty ale, and smoked long clay pipes, and sang college songs in cracked falsetto.

Mrs. Taylor was ashamed of them — disappointed. Was this the college spirit of which she had read so much? The old cronies leered at her as she came in to light the candles — they leered at her; and the one seated next to her husband poked that fortunate gentleman in the ribs and congratulated him on his matrimonial estate.

Yet Mr. and Mrs. Taylor were happy, or reasonably so. He took much pride in her intellect, indulged her in all material things she wanted, and never thwarted her little ambitions to give functions to great men who came up from the provinces.

She organized a Literary Coterie, to meet every Saturday and study Mary Wollstonecraft's book on the "Rights of Woman."

Occasionally, she sat in the visitors' gallery at Parliament, but always behind the screen. And constantly she wrote out her thoughts on the themes of the time. Her husband never regarded these things as proof that she was inwardly miserable, unsatisfied, and in spirit was roaming the universe seeking a panacea for soul-nostalgia; not he! Nor she.

And so she gave the function to the Right Honorable Nobody from Essex. And among thirty or forty other people was one John Stuart Mill, son of the eminent James Mill, historian and philosopher, also Head Examiner of the East India House. Mr. and Mrs. Taylor had made out the list of people between them, choosing those whom

they thought had sufficient phosphorus so they would enjoy meeting a great theological meteoric personality from Essex.

Mr. Taylor had seen young Mr. Mill in the East India House, where young Mr. Mill made out invoices with big seals on them. Mr. Taylor had said to Mr. Mill that it was a fine day, to which proposition Mr. Mill agreed.

The Honorable James Mill was invited, too, but could not come, as he was President of the Land Tenure League, and a meeting was on for the same night.

Mr. Taylor introduced to the company the eminent visitor from Essex — they had been chums together at Oxford — and then Mr. Taylor withdrew into a quiet corner and enjoyed a nap as the manuscript was being read in sonorous orotund.

The subject was, "The Proper Sphere of Woman in the Social Cosmogony." By chance Mrs. Taylor and John Stuart Mill sat next to each other.

The speaker moved with stately tread through his firstly to his seventhly, and then proceeded to sum up. The argument was that of Saint Paul amplified, "Let woman learn in subjection" — "For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ is also the head of the Church" — "God made woman for a helpmeet to man," etc.

Mrs. Taylor looked at young Mr. Mill, and Mr. Mill looked at Mrs. Taylor. They were both thinking hard, and without a word spoken they agreed with each other on this, that the speaker had no message.

Young Mr. Mill noted that one of Mrs. Taylor's eyes was much wider open than the other, and that her head had corners. She seemed

much beyond him in years and experience, although actually she was two years younger — a fact he did not then know.

"Does not a woman need a helpmeet, too?" she wrote on the fly-leaf of a book she held in her lap. And young Mr. Mill took the book and wrote beneath in a copper-plate East India hand, "I do not know what a woman needs; but I think the speaker needs a helpmeet."

And then Mrs. Taylor wrote: "All help must be mutual. No man can help a woman unless she helps him — the benefit of help lies as much in the giving as in the receiving."

After the function Mrs. Taylor asked Mr. Mill to call. It is quite likely that on this occasion she asked a good many of the other guests to call.

Mr. Mill called the next evening.

John Stuart Mill was not a university man. He was an intellectual cosset, and educated in a way that made the English pedagogues stand aghast. So, probably thousands of parents said, "Go to! we will educate our own children," and went at their boys in the same way that James Mill treated his son, but the world has produced only one John Stuart Mill.

Axtell, the trotter, in his day held both the two-year-old and the three-year-old record. He was driven in harness from the time he was weaned, and was given work that would have cocked most ankles and sent old horses over on their knees. But Axtell stood the test and grew strong.

Certain horsemen, seeing the success of Axtell, tried his driver's plan, and one millionaire I know ruined a thousand colts and never

produced a single racehorse by following the plan upon which Axtell thrived.

The father of John Stuart Mill would now be considered one of England's great thinkers, had he not been so unfortunate as to be thrown completely into the shadow by his son. As it is, James Mill lives in history as the man who insisted that his baby three years old should be taught the Greek alphabet. When five years old, this baby spoke with an Attic accent, and corrected his elders who dropped the aspirate. With unconscious irony John Stuart Mill wrote in his "Autobiography," "I learned no Latin until my eighth year, at which time, however, I was familiar with 'Æsop's Fables,' most of the 'Anabasis,' the 'Memorabilia' of Xenophon, and the 'Lives of the Philosophers' by Diogenes Lærtius, part of Lucian, and the 'Ad Demonicum' and 'Ad Nicoclem' of Isocrates." Besides these he had also read all of Plato, Plutarch, Gibbon, Hume and Rollin, and was formulating in his mind a philosophy of history.

Whether these things "educated" the boy or not will always remain an unsettled question for debating-societies.

But that he learned and grew through constant association with his father there is no doubt. Wherever the father went, the boy trotted along, a pad in one hand and a pencil in the other, always making notes, always asking questions, and always answering propositions.

The long out-of-door walks doubtless saved him from death. He never had a childhood, and if he ever had a mother, the books are silent concerning her. He must have been an incubator baby, or else been found under a cabbage-leaf. James Mill treated his wife as if her office and opinions were too insignificant to consider seriously — she was only an unimportant incident in his life. James Mill was the typical beef-eating Englishman described by Taine.

According to Doctor Bain's most interesting little book on John Stuart Mill, the youth at nine was appointed to supervise the education of the rest of the family, "a position more pleasing to his vanity than helpful to his manners." That he was a beautiful prig at this time goes without saying.

The scaffolding of learning he mistook for the edifice, a fallacy borrowed from his father. At the age of fourteen he knew as much as his father, and acknowledged it. He was then sent to France to study the science of government under Sir Samuel Bentham.

His father's intent was that he should study law, and in his own mind was the strong conviction that he was set apart, and that his life was sacred to the service of humanity. A year at the study of law, and a more or less intimate association with barristers, relieved him of the hallucination that a lawyer's life is consecrated to justice and the rights of man — quips, quirks and quilllets were not to his taste.

James Mill held the office of Chief Examiner in the East India House, at a salary equal to seven thousand five hundred dollars a year. The gifted son was now nineteen, and at work as a junior clerk under his father at twenty pounds a year. Before the year was up he was promoted, and when he was twenty-one his salary was one hundred pounds a year.

There are people who will say, "Of course his father pushed him along." But the fact that after his father's death he was promoted by the Directors to Head of the Office disposes of all suspicion of favoritism. The management of the East India Company was really a matter of statesmanship, and the direct, methodical and practical mind of Mill fitted him for the place.

Thomas Carlyle, writing to his wife in Scotland in the year Eighteen Hundred Thirty-one, said: "This young Mill, I fancy and hope, is a

being one can love. A slender, rather tallish and elegant youth, with Roman-nosed face, earnestly smiling blue eyes, modest, remarkably gifted, great precision of utterance, calm—a distinctly able and amiable youth."

So now behold him at twenty-five, a student and scholarly recluse, delving all day in accounts and dispatches, grubbing in books at night, and walking an hour before sunrise in the park every morning. It was about then that he accepted the invitation of Mrs. Taylor to call.

I do not find that James Mill ever disputed the proposition that women have souls: he evidently considered the matter quite beyond argument — they hadn't. His son, at this time, was of a like opinion.

John Stuart Mill had not gone into society, and women to him were simply undeveloped men, to be treated kindly and indulgently. As mental companions, the idea was unthinkable. And love was entirely out of his orbit — all of his energies had been worked up into great thoughts. Doctor Bain says that at twenty-five John Stuart Mill was as ignorant of sex as a girl of ten.

He called on Mrs. Taylor because she had pleased him when she said, "The person who helps another gets as much out of the transaction as the one who is helped." This was a thought worth while. Perhaps Mrs. Taylor had borrowed the idea. But anyway it was something to repeat it. He revolved it over in his mind all day, off and on. "To help another is to help yourself. A helpmeet must grow by the exercise of being useful. Therefore, a woman grows as her husband grows — she can not stand if she puts forth intelligent effort. All help is mutual."

"One eye was wider than the other — her head had corners — she carried her chin in!"

John Stuart Mill wished the day would not drag so; after supper he would go and call on Mrs. Taylor, and ask her to explain what she meant by all help being mutual — it was a trifle paradoxical!

The Taylors were just finishing tea when young Mr. Mill called. They were surprised and delighted to see him. He was a bit abashed, and could not quite remember what it was he wanted to ask Mrs. Taylor, but he finally got around to something else just as good. Mrs. Taylor had written an article on the "Subjugation of Women" — would Mr. Mill take it home with him and read it, or would he like to hear her read a little of it now?

Mr. Mill's fine face revealed his delight at the prospect of being read to. So Mrs. Taylor read a little aloud to Mr. Mill, while Mr. Taylor took a much-needed nap in the corner.

In a few days Mr. Mill called to return Mrs. Taylor's manuscript and leave a little essay he himself had written on a similar theme. Mr. Taylor was greatly pleased at this fine friendship that had sprung up between his gifted wife and young Mr. Mill — Mrs. Taylor was so much improved in health, so much more buoyant! Thursday night soon became sacred at the Taylors' to Mr. Mill, and Sunday he always took dinner with them.

Goldwin Smith, a trifle grumpy, with a fine forgetfulness as to the saltiness of time, says that young Mr. Mill had been kept such a recluse that when he met Mrs. Taylor he considered that he was the first man to discover the potency of sex, and that he thought his experience was unique in the history of mankind.

Perhaps love does make a fool of a man — I really can not say. If so, then John Stuart Mill never recovered his sanity. Suppose we let John speak for himself — I quote from his "Autobiography":

[Editor: Mill eulogy to his wife omitted.]

The social functions at the Taylor home now became less frequent, and finally ceased. Women looked upon the friendship of John Stuart Mill and Mrs. Taylor with some resentment and a slight tinge of jealousy. Men lifted an eyebrow and called it "equivocal" — to use the phrase of Clement Shorter.

"The plan of having a husband and also a lover is not entirely without precedent," said Disraeli in mock apology, and took snuff solemnly. Meantime manuscripts were traveling back and forth between the East India House and the Taylors'.

John Stuart Mill was contributing essays to the magazines that made the thinkers think. He took a position opposed to his father, and maintained the vast importance of the sentiments and feelings in making up the sum of human lives. When Mill was mentioned, people asked which one.

The Carlyles, who at first were very proud of the acquaintanceship of Mill, dropped him. Then he dropped them. Years after, the genial Tammias, writing to his brother John, confirmed his opinion of Mill, "after Mill took up with that Taylor woman." Says Tammias: "You have lost nothing by missing the 'Autobiography' of Mill. I never read a more uninteresting book, nor should I say a sillier."

James Mill protested vehemently against his son visiting at the Taylors', and even threatened the young man with the loss of his position, but John Stuart made no answer. The days John did not see Harriet he wrote her a letter and she wrote him one.

To protect himself in his position, John now ceased to do any literary work or to write any personal letters at the office. While there he attended to business and nothing else. In the early morning he wrote

or walked. Evenings he devoted to Mrs. Taylor; either writing to her or for her, or else seeing her. On Saturday afternoons they would usually go botanizing, for botany is purely a lovers' invention. [Editor: Mill was an accomplished botanist. He wrote a calendar of scents for Caroline Fox.]

Old acquaintances who wanted to see Mill had to go to the East India House, and there they got just five minutes of his dignified presence. Doctor Bain complains, "I could no longer get him to walk with me in the park — he had reduced life to a system, and the old friends were shelved and pigeonholed."

When Mill was thirty his salary was raised to five hundred pounds a year. His father died the same year, and his brothers and sisters discarded him. His literary fame had grown, and he was editor of the London "Review." The pedantry of youth had disappeared — practical business had sobered him, and love had relieved him of his idolatry for books. Heart now meant more to him than art. His plea was for liberty, national and individual. The modesty, gentleness and dignity of the man made his presence felt wherever he went. A contemporary said: "His features were refined and regular — the nose straight and finely shaped, his lips thin and compressed — the face and body seemed to represent the inflexibility of the inner man. His whole aspect was one of high and noble achievement — invincible purpose, iron will, unflinching self-oblivion — a world's umpire!"

Mill felt that life was such a precious heritage that we should be jealous of every moment, so he shut himself in from every disturbing feature. All that he wrote he submitted to Mrs. Taylor — she corrected, amended, revised. She read for him, and spent long hours at the British Museum in research work, while he did the business of the East India Company.

When his "Logic" was published, in Eighteen Hundred Forty, he had known Mrs. Taylor nine years. That she had a considerable hand in this comprehensive work there is no doubt. The book placed Mill upon the very pinnacle of fame. John Morley declared him "England's foremost thinker," a title to which Gladstone added the weight of his endorsement, a thing we would hardly expect from an ardent churchman, since Mill was always an avowed freethinker, and once declared in Gladstone's presence, "I am one of the few men in England who have not abandoned their religious beliefs, because I never had any."

Justin McCarthy says in his reminiscences: "A wiser and more virtuous man than Mill I never knew nor expect to know; and yet I have had the good fortune to know many wise and virtuous men. I never knew any man of really great intellect, who carried less of the ways of ordinary greatness about him. There was an added charm to the very shyness of his manner when one remembers how fearless he was, if the occasion called for fortitude or courage."

After the publication of the "Logic," Mill was too big a man for the public to lose sight of.

He went his simple way, but to escape being pointed out, he kept from all crowds, and public functions were to him tabu.

When Mrs. Taylor gave birth to a baby girl, an obscure London newspaper printed, "A Malthusian Warning to the East India Company," which no doubt reflected a certain phase of public interest, but Mill continued his serene way undisturbed.

To this baby girl, Helen Taylor, Mill was always most devotedly attached. As she grew into childhood he taught her botany, and people who wanted a glimpse of Mill were advised to "look for him

with a flaxen-haired little sprite of a girl any Saturday afternoon on Hampton Heath."

Mr. Taylor died in July, Eighteen Hundred Forty-nine, and in April, Eighteen Hundred Fifty-one, Mrs. Taylor and Mill were quietly married. The announcement of the marriage sent a spasm over literary England, and set the garrulous tongues a-wagging.

George Mill, a brother of John Stuart, with unconscious humor placed himself on record thus, "Mrs. Taylor was never to anybody else what she was to John." Bishop Spalding once wrote out this strange, solemn, emasculate proposition, "Mill's 'Autobiography' contains proof that a soul, with an infinite craving for God, not finding Him, will worship anything — a woman, a memory!"

This almost makes one think that the good Bishop was paraphrasing and reversing Voltaire's remark, "When a woman no longer finds herself acceptable to man she turns to God."

What the world thought of Mill's wife is not vital — what he thought of her, certainly was. I quote from the "Autobiography," which Edward Everett Hale calls "two lives in one — written by one of them":

[Editor: Omission of Mill appreciation of Mrs Taylor, his subsequent wife.]

Mrs. Mill died suddenly, at Avignon, France, while on a journey with Mr. Mill. There she was buried.

The stricken husband and daughter rented a cottage in the village, to be near the grave of the beloved dead. They intended to remain only a few weeks, but after a year they concluded they could "never be content to go away and leave the spot consecrated by her death,"

unlike Robert Browning, who left Florence forever on the death of his wife, not having the inclination or the fortitude even to visit her grave.

Mill finally bought the Avignon cottage, refitted it, brought over from England all his books and intimate belongings, and Avignon was his home for fifteen years — the rest of his life.

Mill always referred to Helen Taylor as "my wife's daughter," [editor: his step-daughter] and the daughter called him "Pater." The love between these two was most tender and beautiful. The man could surely never have survived the shock of his wife's death had it not been for Helen. She it was who fitted up the cottage, and went to England bringing over his books, manuscripts and papers, luring him on to live by many little devices of her ready wit. She built a portico all around the cottage, and in Winter this was enclosed in glass. Helen called it, "Father's semi-circumgyratory," and if he failed to pace this portico forty times backward and forward each forenoon, she would take him gently by the arm and firmly insist that he should fill the prescription. They resumed their studies of botany, and Helen organized classes which went with them on their little excursions.

In Eighteen Hundred Sixty-five, Mill was induced to stand for Parliament for Westminster. The move was made by London friends in the hope of winning him back to England. He agreed to the proposition on condition that he should not be called upon to canvass for votes or take any part in the campaign.

He was elected by a safe majority, and proved a power for good in the House of Commons. The Speaker once remarked, "The presence of Mr. Mill in this body I perceive has elevated the tone of debate." This sounds like the remark of Wendell Phillips when Dogmatism was hot on the heels of the Sage of Concord: "If Emerson goes to Hell, his presence there will surely change the climate."

Yet when Mill ran for re-election he was defeated, it having leaked out that he was an "infidel," since he upheld Charles Bradlaugh in his position that the affirmation of a man who does not believe in the Bible should be accepted as freely as the oath of one who does. In passing it is worth while to note that the courts of Christendom have now accepted the view of Bradlaugh and of Mill on this point.

The best resume of Mill's philosophy is to be found in Taine's "English Literature," a fact to which Mill himself attested.

The dedication of "On Liberty," printed as a preface to this "Little Journey," rivals in worth the wonderful little classic of Ernest Renan to his sister, Henriette.

Mill died at Avignon in Eighteen Hundred Seventy-three, his last days soothed by the tender ministrations of the daughter Helen. His body, according to his wish, was buried in his wife's grave, and so the dust of the lovers lies mingled.

Of True and False Democracy; Representation of All, and Representation of the Majority only.

[Chapter VII of Representative Government.]

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[Editorial note:

"Representative Government" is a classic case for the most suitable form of rule, to be read in its own right. I have only included here two chapters on methods of election, which topic is the central concern of this anthology on Mill.]

It has been seen that the dangers incident to a representative democracy are of two kinds: danger of a low grade of intelligence in the representative body, and in the popular opinion which controls it; and danger of class legislation on the part of the numerical majority, these being all composed of the same class. We have next to consider how far it is possible so to organize the democracy as, without interfering materially with the characteristic benefits of democratic government, to do away with these two great evils, or at least to abate them in the utmost degree attainable by human contrivance.

The common mode of attempting this is by limiting the democratic character of the representation through a more or less restricted suffrage. But there is a previous consideration which, duly kept in view, considerably modifies the circumstances which are supposed to render such a restriction necessary. A completely equal democracy, in a nation in which a single class composes the numerical majority, can not be divested of certain evils; but those evils are greatly aggravated by the fact that the democracies which at present exist are not equal, but systematically unequal in favor of the predominant class. Two very different ideas are usually confounded under the name democracy. The pure idea of democracy, according to its definition, is the government of the whole people by the whole people, equally represented. Democracy, as commonly conceived and hitherto practiced, is the government of the whole people by a mere majority of the people exclusively represented. The former is synonymous with the equality of all citizens; the latter, strangely confounded with it, is a government of privilege in favor of the numerical majority, who alone possess practically any voice in the state. This is the inevitable consequence of the manner in which the votes are now taken, to the complete disfranchisement of minorities.

The confusion of ideas here is great, but it is so easily cleared up that one would suppose the slightest indication would be sufficient to place the matter in its true light before any mind of average intelligence. It would be so but for the power of habit; owing to which, the simplest idea, if unfamiliar, has as great difficulty in making its way to the mind as a far more complicated one. That the minority must yield to the majority, the smaller number to the greater, is a familiar idea; and accordingly, men think there is no necessity for using their minds any further, and it does not occur to them that there is any medium between allowing the smaller number to be equally powerful with the greater, and blotting out the smaller number

altogether. In a representative body actually deliberating, the minority must of course be overruled; and in an equal democracy (since the opinions of the constituents, when they insist on them, determine those of the representative body), the majority of the people, through their representatives, will outvote and prevail over the minority and their representatives. But does it follow that the minority should have no representatives at all? Because the majority ought to prevail over the minority, must the majority have all the votes, the minority none? Is it necessary that the minority should not even be heard? Nothing but habit and old association can reconcile any reasonable being to the needless injustice. In a really equal democracy, every or any section would be represented, not disproportionately, but proportionately. A majority of the electors would always have a majority of the representatives, but a minority of the electors would always have a minority of the representatives. Man for man, they would be as fully represented as the majority. Unless they are, there is not equal government, but a government of inequality and privilege: one part of the people rule over the rest: there is a part whose fair and equal share of influence in the representation is withheld from them, contrary to all just government, but, above all, contrary to the principle of democracy, which professes equality as its very root and foundation.

The injustice and violation of principle are not less flagrant because those who suffer by them are a minority, for there is not equal suffrage where every single individual does not count for as much as any other single individual in the community. But it is not only a minority who suffer. Democracy, thus constituted, does not even attain its ostensible object, that of giving the powers of government in all cases to the numerical majority. It does something very different; it gives them to a majority of the majority, who may be, and often are, but a minority of the whole. All principles are most effectually tested by extreme cases. Suppose, then, that, in a

country governed by equal and universal suffrage, there is a contested election in every constituency, and every election is carried by a small majority. The Parliament thus brought together represents little more than a bare majority of the people. This Parliament proceeds to legislate, and adopts important measures by a bare majority of itself. What guaranty is there that these measures accord with the wishes of a majority of the people? Nearly half the electors, having been outvoted at the hustings, have had no influence at all in the decision; and the whole of these may be, a majority of them probably are, hostile to the measures, having voted against those by whom they have been carried. Of the remaining electors, nearly half have chosen representatives who, by supposition, have voted against the measures. It is possible, therefore, and even probable, that the opinion which has prevailed was agreeable only to a minority of the nation, though a majority of that portion of it whom the institutions of the country have erected into a ruling class. If democracy means the certain ascendancy of the majority, there are no means of insuring that, but by allowing every individual figure to tell equally in the summing up. Any minority left out, either purposely or by the play of the machinery, gives the power not to the majority, but to a minority in some other part of the scale.

The only answer which can possibly be made to this reasoning is, that as different opinions predominate in different localities, the opinion which is in a minority in some places has a majority in others, and on the whole every opinion which exists in the constituencies obtains its fair share of voices in the representation. And this is roughly true in the present state of the constituency; if it were not, the discordance of the House with the general sentiment of the country would soon become evident. But it would be no longer true if the present constituency were much enlarged, still less if made co-extensive with the whole population; for in that case the

majority in every locality would consist of manual laborers; and when there was any question pending on which these classes were at issue with the rest of the community, no other class could succeed in getting represented any where. Even now, is it not a great grievance that in every Parliament a very numerous portion of the electors, willing and anxious to be represented, have no member in the House for whom they have voted? Is it just that every elector of Marylebone is obliged to be represented by two nominees of the vestries, every elector of Finsbury or Lambeth by those (as is generally believed) of the publicans? The constituencies to which most of the highly educated and public spirited persons in the country belong, those of the large towns, are now, in great part, either unrepresented or misrepresented. The electors who are on a different side in party politics from the local majority are unrepresented. Of those who are on the same side, a large proportion are misrepresented; having been obliged to accept the man who had the greatest number of supporters in their political party, though his opinions may differ from theirs on every other point. The state of things is, in some respects, even worse than if the minority were not allowed to vote at all; for then, at least, the majority might have a member who would represent their own best mind; while now, the necessity of not dividing the party, for fear of letting in its opponents, induces all to vote either for the first person who presents himself wearing their colors, or for the one brought forward by their local leaders; and these, if we pay them the compliment, which they very seldom deserve, of supposing their choice to be unbiassed by their personal interests, are compelled, that they may be sure of mustering their whole strength, to bring forward a candidate whom none of the party will strongly object to—that is, a man without any distinctive peculiarity, any known opinions except the shibboleth of the party. This is strikingly exemplified in the United States; where, at the election of President, the strongest party never dares put forward any of its strongest men, because every one of these, from the mere

fact that he has been long in the public eye, has made himself objectionable to some portion or other of the party, and is therefore not so sure a card for rallying all their votes as a person who has never been heard of by the public at all until he is produced as the candidate. Thus, the man who is chosen, even by the strongest party, represents perhaps the real wishes only of the narrow margin by which that party outnumbers the other. Any section whose support is necessary to success possesses a veto on the candidate. Any section which holds out more obstinately than the rest can compel all the others to adopt its nominee; and this superior pertinacity is unhappily more likely to be found among those who are holding out for their own interest than for that of the public. Speaking generally, the choice of the majority is determined by that portion of the body who are the most timid, the most narrow-minded and prejudiced, or who cling most tenaciously to the exclusive class-interest; and the electoral rights of the minority, while useless for the purposes for which votes are given, serve only for compelling the majority to accept the candidate of the weakest or worst portion of themselves.

That, while recognizing these evils, many should consider them as the necessary price paid for a free government, is in no way surprising; it was the opinion of all the friends of freedom up to a recent period. But the habit of passing them over as irremediable has become so inveterate, that many persons seem to have lost the capacity of looking at them as things which they would be glad to remedy if they could. From despairing of a cure, there is too often but one step to denying the disease; and from this follows dislike to having a remedy proposed, as if the proposer were creating a mischief instead of offering relief from one. People are so inured to the evils that they feel as if it were unreasonable, if not wrong, to complain of them. Yet, avoidable or not, he must be a purblind lover of liberty on whose mind they do not weigh; who would not rejoice at

the discovery that they could be dispensed with. Now, nothing is more certain than that the virtual blotting out of the minority is no necessary or natural consequence of freedom; that, far from having any connection with democracy, it is diametrically opposed to the first principle of democracy, representation in proportion to numbers. It is an essential part of democracy that minorities should be adequately represented. No real democracy, nothing but a false show of democracy, is possible without it.

Those who have seen and felt, in some degree, the force of these considerations, have proposed various expedients by which the evil may be, in a greater or less degree, mitigated. Lord John Russell, in one of his Reform Bills, introduced a provision that certain constituencies should return three members, and that in these each elector should be allowed to vote only for two; and Mr. Disraeli, in the recent debates, revived the memory of the fact by reproaching him for it, being of opinion, apparently, that it befits a Conservative statesman to regard only means, and to disown scornfully all fellow-feeling with any one who is betrayed, even once, into thinking of ends. Others have proposed that each elector should be allowed to vote only for one. By either of these plans, a minority equalling or exceeding a third of the local constituency, would be able, if it attempted no more, to return one out of three members. The same result might be attained in a still better way if, as proposed in an able pamphlet by Mr. James Garth Marshall, the elector retained his three votes, but was at liberty to bestow them all upon the same candidate. These schemes, though infinitely better than none at all, are yet but makeshifts, and attain the end in a very imperfect manner, since all local minorities of less than a third, and all minorities, however numerous, which are made up from several constituencies, would remain unrepresented. It is much to be lamented, however, that none of these plans have been carried into effect, as any of them would have recognized the right principle, and

prepared the way for its more complete application. But real equality of representation is not obtained unless any set of electors amounting to the average number of a constituency, wherever in the country they happen to reside, have the power of combining with one another to return a representative. This degree of perfection in representation appeared impracticable until a man of great capacity, fitted alike for large general views and for the contrivance of practical details — Mr. Thomas Hare — had proved its possibility by drawing up a scheme for its accomplishment, embodied in a Draft of an Act of Parliament; a scheme which has the almost unparalleled merit of carrying out a great principle of government in a manner approaching to ideal perfection as regards the special object in view, while it attains incidentally several other ends of scarcely inferior importance.

According to this plan, the unit of representation, the quota of electors who would be entitled to have a member to themselves, would be ascertained by the ordinary process of taking averages, the number of voters being divided by the number of seats in the House; and every candidate who obtained that quota would be returned, from however great a number of local constituencies it might be gathered. The votes would, as at present, be given locally; but any elector would be at liberty to vote for any candidate, in whatever part of the country he might offer himself. Those electors, therefore, who did not wish to be represented by any of the local candidates, might aid by their vote in the return of the person they liked best among all those throughout the country who had expressed a willingness to be chosen. This would so far give reality to the electoral rights of the otherwise virtually disfranchised minority. But it is important that not those alone who refuse to vote for any of the local candidates, but those also who vote for one of them and are defeated, should be enabled to find elsewhere the representation which they have not succeeded in obtaining in their own district. It is therefore provided

that an elector may deliver a voting paper containing other names in addition to the one which stands foremost in his preference. His vote would only be counted for one candidate; but if the object of his first choice failed to be returned, from not having obtained the quota, his second perhaps might be more fortunate. He may extend his list to a greater number in the order of his preference, so that if the names which stand near the top of the list either can not make up the quota, or are able to make it up without his vote, the vote may still be used for some one whom it may assist in returning. To obtain the full number of members required to complete the House, as well as to prevent very popular candidates from engrossing nearly all the suffrages, it is necessary, however many votes a candidate may obtain, that no more of them than the quota should be counted for his return; the remainder of those who voted for him would have their votes counted for the next person on their respective lists who needed them, and could by their aid complete the quota. To determine which of a candidate's votes should be used for his return, and which set free for others, several methods are proposed, into which we shall not here enter. He would, of course, retain the votes of all those who would not otherwise be represented; and for the remainder, drawing lots, in default of better, would be an unobjectionable expedient. The voting papers would be conveyed to a central office, where the votes would be counted, the number of first, second, third, and other votes given for each candidate ascertained, and the quota would be allotted to every one who could make it up, until the number of the House was complete; first votes being preferred to second, second to third, and so forth. The voting papers, and all the elements of the calculation, would be placed in public repositories, accessible to all whom they concerned; and if any one who had obtained the quota was not duly returned, it would be in his power easily to prove it.

These are the main provisions of the scheme. For a more minute knowledge of its very simple machinery, I must refer to Mr. Hare's "Treatise on the Election of Representatives" (a small volume Published in 1859), and to a pamphlet by Mr. Henry Fawcett, published in 1860, and entitled "Mr. Hare's Reform Bill simplified and explained." This last is a very clear and concise exposition of the plan, reduced to its simplest elements by the omission of some of Mr. Hare's original provisions, which, though in themselves beneficial, were thought to take more from the simplicity of the scheme than they added to its practical advantages. The more these works are studied, the stronger, I venture to predict, will be the impression of the perfect feasibility of the scheme and its transcendant advantages. Such and so numerous are these, that, in my conviction, they place Mr. Hare's plan among the very greatest improvements yet made in the theory and practice of government.

In the first place, it secures a representation, in proportion to numbers, of every division of the electoral body: not two great parties alone, with perhaps a few large sectional minorities in particular places, but every minority in the whole nation, consisting of a sufficiently large number to be, on principles of equal justice, entitled to a representative. Secondly, no elector would, as at present, be nominally represented by some one whom he had not chosen. Every member of the House would be the representative of a unanimous constituency. He would represent a thousand electors, or two thousand, or five thousand, or ten thousand, as the quota might be, every one of whom would have not only voted for him, but selected him from the whole country; not merely from the assortment of two or three perhaps rotten oranges, which may be the only choice offered to him in his local market. Under this relation the tie between the elector and the representative would be of a strength and a value of which at present we have no experience. Every one of the electors would be personally identified with his representative, and the

representative with his constituents. Every elector who voted for him would have done so either because he is the person, in the whole list of candidates for Parliament, who best expresses the voter's own opinions, or because he is one of those whose abilities and character the voter most respects, and whom he most willingly trusts to think for him. The member would represent persons, not the mere bricks and mortar of the town — the voters themselves, not a few vestrymen or parish notabilities merely. All, however, that is worth preserving in the representation of places would be preserved. Though the Parliament of the nation ought to have as little as possible to do with purely local affairs, yet, while it has to do with them, there ought to be members specially commissioned to look after the interests of every important locality; and these there would still be. In every locality which contained many more voters than the quota (and there probably ought to be no local constituency which does not), the majority would generally prefer to be represented by one of themselves; by a person of local knowledge, and residing in the locality, if there is any such person to be found among the candidates, who is otherwise eligible as their representative. It would be the minorities chiefly, who, being unable to return the local member, would look out elsewhere for a candidate likely to obtain other votes in addition to their own.

Of all modes in which a national representation can possibly be constituted, this one affords the best security for the intellectual qualifications desirable in the representatives. At present, by universal admission, it is becoming more and more difficult for any one who has only talents and character to gain admission into the House of Commons. The only persons who can get elected are those who possess local influence, or make their way by lavish expenditure, or who, on the invitation of three or four tradesmen or attorneys, are sent down by one of the two great parties from their London clubs, as men whose votes the party can depend on under

all circumstances. On Mr. Hare's system, those who did not like the local candidates would fill up their voting papers by a selection from all the persons of national reputation on the list of candidates with whose general political principles they were in sympathy. Almost every person, therefore, who had made himself in any way honorably distinguished, though devoid of local influence, and having sworn allegiance to no political party, would have a fair chance of making up the quota, and with this encouragement such persons might be expected to offer themselves in numbers hitherto undreamed of. Hundreds of able men of independent thought, who would have no chance whatever of being chosen by the majority of any existing constituency, have by their writings, or their exertions in some field of public usefulness, made themselves known and approved by a few persons in almost every district of the kingdom; and if every vote that would be given for them in every place could be counted for their election, they might be able to complete the number of the quota. In no other way which it seems possible to suggest would Parliament be so certain of containing the very élite of the country.

And it is not solely through the votes of minorities that this system of election would raise the intellectual standard of the House of Commons. Majorities would be compelled to look out for members of a much higher calibre. When the individuals composing the majority would no longer be reduced to Hobson's choice, of either voting for the person brought forward by their local leaders, or not voting at all; when the nominee of the leaders would have to encounter the competition not solely of the candidate of the minority, but of all the men of established reputation in the country who were willing to serve, it would be impossible any longer to foist upon the electors the first person who presents himself with the catchwords of the party in his mouth, and three or four thousand pounds in his pocket. The majority would insist on having a candidate worthy of their

choice, or they would carry their votes somewhere else, and the minority would prevail. The slavery of the majority to the least estimable portion of their numbers would be at an end; the very best and most capable of the local notabilities would be put forward by preference; if possible, such as were known in some advantageous way beyond the locality, that their local strength might have a chance of being fortified by stray votes from elsewhere. Constituencies would become competitors for the best candidates, and would vie with one another in selecting from among the men of local knowledge and connections those who were most distinguished in every other respect.

The natural tendency of representative government, as of modern civilization, is towards collective mediocrity: and this tendency is increased by all reductions and extensions of the franchise, their effect being to place the principal power in the hands of classes more and more below the highest level of instruction in the community. But, though the superior intellects and characters will necessarily be outnumbered, it makes a great difference whether or not they are heard. In the false democracy which, instead of giving representation to all, gives it only to the local majorities, the voice of the instructed minority may have no organs at all in the representative body. It is an admitted fact that in the American democracy, which is constructed on this faulty model, the highly-cultivated members of the community, except such of them as are willing to sacrifice their own opinions and modes of judgment, and become the servile mouthpieces of their inferiors in knowledge, do not even offer themselves for Congress or the State Legislatures, so certain is it that they would have no chance of being returned. Had a plan like Mr. Hare's by good fortune suggested itself to the enlightened and disinterested founders of the American Republic, the federal and state assemblies would have contained many of these distinguished men, and democracy would have been spared

its greatest reproach and one of its most formidable evils. Against this evil the system of personal representation proposed by Mr. Hare is almost a specific. The minority of instructed minds scattered through the local constituencies would unite to return a number, proportioned to their own numbers, of the very ablest men the country contains. They would be under the strongest inducement to choose such men, since in no other mode could they make their small numerical strength tell for any thing considerable. The representatives of the majority, besides that they would themselves be improved in quality by the operation of the system, would no longer have the whole field to themselves. They would indeed outnumber the others, as much as the one class of electors outnumbers the other in the country: they could always outvote them, but they would speak and vote in their presence, and subject to their criticism. When any difference arose, they would have to meet the arguments of the instructed few by reasons, at least apparently, as cogent; and since they could not, as those do who are speaking to persons already unanimous, simply assume that they are in the right, it would occasionally happen to them to become convinced that they were in the wrong. As they would in general be well-meaning (for thus much may reasonably be expected from a fairly-chosen national representation), their own minds would be insensibly raised by the influence of the minds with which they were in contact, or even in conflict. The champions of unpopular doctrines would not put forth their arguments merely in books and periodicals, read only by their own side; the opposing ranks would meet face to face and hand to hand, and there would be a fair comparison of their intellectual strength in the presence of the country. It would then be found out whether the opinion which prevailed by counting votes would also prevail if the votes were weighed as well as counted. The multitude have often a true instinct for distinguishing an able man when he has the means of displaying his ability in a fair field before them. If such a man fails to obtain any portion of his just weight, it is

through institutions or usages which keep him out of sight. In the old democracies there were no means of keeping out of sight any able man: the bema was open to him; he needed nobody's consent to become a public adviser. It is not so in a representative government; and the best friends of representative democracy can hardly be without misgivings that the Themistocles or Demosthenes whose councils would have saved the nation, might be unable during his whole life ever to obtain a seat. But if the presence in the representative assembly can be insured of even a few of the first minds in the country, though the remainder consist only of average minds, the influence of these leading spirits is sure to make itself insensibly felt in the general deliberations, even though they be known to be, in many respects, opposed to the tone of popular opinion and feeling. I am unable to conceive any mode by which the presence of such minds can be so positively insured as by that proposed by Mr. Hare.

This portion of the assembly would also be the appropriate organ of a great social function, for which there is no provision in any existing democracy, but which in no government can remain permanently unfulfilled without condemning that government to infallible degeneracy and decay. This may be called the function of Antagonism. In every government there is some power stronger than all the rest; and the power which is strongest tends perpetually to become the sole power. Partly by intention and partly unconsciously, it is ever striving to make all other things bend to itself, and is not content while there is any thing which makes permanent head against it, any influence not in agreement with its spirit. Yet, if it succeeds in suppressing all rival influences, and moulding every thing after its own model, improvement, in that country, is at an end, and decline commences. Human improvement is a product of many factors, and no power ever yet constituted among mankind includes them all: even the most beneficent power only contains in itself some

of the requisites of good, and the remainder, if progress is to continue, must be derived from some other source. No community has ever long continued progressive but while a conflict was going on between the strongest power in the community and some rival power; between the spiritual and temporal authorities; the military or territorial and the industrious classes; the king and the people; the orthodox and religious reformers. When the victory on either side was so complete as to put an end to the strife, and no other conflict took its place, first stagnation followed, and then decay. The ascendancy of the numerical majority is less unjust, and, on the whole, less mischievous than many others, but it is attended with the very same kind of dangers, and even more certainly; for when the government is in the hands of One or a Few, the Many are always existent as a rival power, which may not be strong enough ever to control the other, but whose opinion and sentiment are a moral, and even a social support to all who, either from conviction or contrariety of interest, are opposed to any of the tendencies of the ruling authority. But when the democracy is supreme, there is no One or Few strong enough for dissentient opinions and injured or menaced interests to lean upon. The great difficulty of democratic government has hitherto seemed to be, how to provide in a democratic society — what circumstances have provided hitherto in all the societies which have maintained themselves ahead of others — a social support, a point d'appui, for individual resistance to the tendencies of the ruling power; a protection, a rallying-point, for opinions and interests which the ascendant public opinion views with disfavor. For want of such a point d'appui, the older societies, and all but a few modern ones, either fell into dissolution or became stationary (which means slow deterioration) through the exclusive predominance of a part only of the conditions of social and mental well-being.

Now, this great want the system of Personal Representation is fitted to supply in the most perfect manner which the circumstances of

modern society admit of. The only quarter in which to look for a supplement, or completing corrective to the instincts of a democratic majority, is the instructed minority; but, in the ordinary mode of constituting democracy, this minority has no organ: Mr. Hare's system provides one. The representatives who would be returned to Parliament by the aggregate of minorities would afford that organ in its greatest perfection. A separate organization of the instructed classes, even if practicable, would be invidious, and could only escape from being offensive by being totally without influence. But if the élite of these classes formed part of the Parliament, by the same title as any other of its members — by representing the same number of citizens, the same numerical fraction of the national will — their presence could give umbrage to nobody, while they would be in the position of highest vantage, both for making their opinions and councils heard on all important subjects, and for taking an active part in public business. Their abilities would probably draw to them more than their numerical share of the actual administration of government; as the Athenians did not confide responsible public functions to Cleon or Hyperbolus (the employment of Cleon at Pylos and Amphipolis was purely exceptional), but Nicias, and Theramenes, and Alcibiades were in constant employment both at home and abroad, though known to sympathize more with oligarchy than with democracy. The instructed minority would, in the actual voting, count only for their numbers, but as a moral power they would count for much more, in virtue of their knowledge, and of the influence it would give them over the rest. An arrangement better adapted to keep popular opinion within reason and justice, and to guard it from the various deteriorating influences which assail the weak side of democracy, could scarcely by human ingenuity be devised. A democratic people would in this way be provided with what in any other way it would almost certainly miss — leaders of a higher grade of intellect and character than itself. Modern democracy

would have its occasional Pericles, and its habitual group of superior and guiding minds.

With all this array of reasons, of the most fundamental character, on the affirmative side of the question, what is there on the negative? Nothing that will sustain examination, when people can once be induced to bestow any real examination upon a new thing. Those indeed, if any such there be, who, under pretense of equal justice, aim only at substituting the class ascendancy of the poor for that of the rich, will of course be unfavorable to a scheme which places both on a level. But I do not believe that any such wish exists at present among the working classes of this country, though I would not answer for the effect which opportunity and demagogic artifices may hereafter have in exciting it. In the United States, where the numerical majority have long been in full possession of collective despotism, they would probably be as unwilling to part with it as a single despot or an aristocracy. But I believe that the English democracy would as yet be content with protection against the class legislation of others, without claiming the power to exercise it in their turn.

Among the ostensible objectors to Mr. Hare's scheme, some profess to think the plan unworkable; but these, it will be found, are generally people who have barely heard of it, or have given it a very slight and cursory examination. Others are unable to reconcile themselves to the loss of what they term the local character of the representation. A nation does not seem to them to consist of persons, but of artificial units, the creation of geography and statistics. Parliament must represent towns and counties, not human beings. But no one seeks to annihilate towns and counties. Towns and counties, it may be presumed, are represented when the human beings who inhabit them are represented. Local feelings can not exist without somebody who feels them, nor local interests without somebody interested in

them. If the human beings whose feelings and interests these are have their proper share of representation, these feelings and interests are represented in common with all other feelings and interests of those persons. But I can not see why the feelings and interests which arrange mankind according to localities should be the only one thought worthy of being represented; or why people who have other feelings and interests, which they value more than they do their geographical ones, should be restricted to these as the sole principle of their political classification. The notion that Yorkshire and Middlesex have rights apart from those of their inhabitants, or that Liverpool and Exeter are the proper objects of the legislator's care, in contradistinction the population of those places, is a curious specimen of delusion produced by words.

In general, however, objectors cut the matter short by affirming that the people of England will never consent to such a system. What the people of England are likely to think of those who pass such a summary sentence on their capacity of understanding and judgment, deeming it superfluous to consider whether a thing is right or wrong before affirming that they are certain to reject it, I will not undertake to say. For my own part, I do not think that the people of England have deserved to be, without trial, stigmatized as insurmountably prejudiced against any thing which can be proved to be good either for themselves or for others. It also appears to me that when prejudices persist obstinately, it is the fault of nobody so much as of those who make a point of proclaiming them insuperable, as an excuse to themselves for never joining in an attempt to remove them. Any prejudice whatever will be insurmountable if those who do not share it themselves truckle to it, and flatter it, and accept it as a law of nature. I believe, however, that of prejudice, properly speaking, there is in this case none except on the lips of those who talk about it, and that there is in general, among those who have yet heard of the proposition, no other hostility to it than the natural and

healthy distrust attaching to all novelties which have not been sufficiently canvassed to make generally manifest all the pros and cons of the question. The only serious obstacle is the unfamiliarity: this, indeed, is a formidable one, for the imagination much more easily reconciles itself to a great alteration in substance than to a very small one in names and forms. But unfamiliarity is a disadvantage which, when there is any real value in an idea, it only requires time to remove; and in these days of discussion and generally awakened interest in improvement, what formerly was the work of centuries often requires only years.

Should there be Two Stages of Election?

[Chapter X of Representative Government.]

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[Editorial note;

By "two stages of election", Mill means indirect elections, as the text indicates.

In 1860, he concludes there is little demand for them but prepares the case against them, prudently, as it turns out. For, over one and a half centuries later, indirect elections dominate the governments of the world. Many electoral reformers, in some English-speaking countries, demand them, in the form of party list systems.

The virtue of the following chapter is that it takes the trouble to make a principled case against indirect elections in general, before their party list versions became prevalent.

Indeed, the above chapter, which promotes the Hare plan, originated virtually the only direct elections in world use for general elections.

Whereas, single district elections are ambiguous as to either choice for an individual or a group, and party lists count primarily or exclusively for groups of candidates.]

In some representative constitutions, the plan has been adopted of choosing the members of the representative body by a double process, the primary electors only choosing other electors, and these electing the member of Parliament. This contrivance was probably intended as a slight impediment to the full sweep of popular feeling, giving the suffrage, and with it the complete ultimate power, to the Many, but compelling them to exercise it through the agency of a comparatively few, who, it was supposed, would be less moved than the Demos by the gusts of popular passion; and as the electors, being already a select body, might be expected to exceed in intellect and character the common level of their constituents, the choice made by them was thought likely to be more careful and enlightened, and would, in any case, be made under a greater feeling of responsibility than election by the masses themselves. This plan of filtering, as it were, the popular suffrage through an intermediate body admits of a very plausible defense; since it may be said, with great appearance of reason, that less intellect and instruction are required for judging who among our neighbors can be most safely trusted to choose a member of Parliament than who is himself fittest to be one.

In the first place, however, if the dangers incident to popular power may be thought to be in some degree lessened by this indirect management, so also are its benefits; and the latter effect is much more certain than the former. To enable the system to work as desired, it must be carried into effect in the spirit in which it is planned; the electors must use the suffrage in the manner supposed by the theory, that is, each of them must not ask himself who the member of Parliament should be, but only whom he would best like

to choose one for him. It is evident that the advantages which indirect is supposed to have over direct election require this disposition of mind in the voter, and will only be realized by his taking the doctrine au serieux, that his sole business is to choose the choosers, not the member himself. The supposition must be, that he will not occupy his thoughts with political opinions and measures or political men, but will be guided by his personal respect for some private individual, to whom he will give a general power of attorney to act for him. Now if the primary electors adopt this view of their position, one of the principal uses of giving them a vote at all is defeated; the political function to which they are called fails of developing public spirit and political intelligence, of making public affairs an object of interest to their feelings and of exercise to their faculties. The supposition, moreover, involves inconsistent conditions; for if the voter feels no interest in the final result, how or why can he be expected to feel any in the process which leads to it? To wish to have a particular individual for his representative in Parliament is possible to a person of a very moderate degree of virtue and intelligence, and to wish to choose an elector who will elect that individual is a natural consequence; but for a person who does not care who is elected, or feels bound to put that consideration in abeyance, to take any interest whatever in merely naming the worthiest person to elect another according to his own judgment, implies a zeal for what is right in the abstract, an habitual principle of duty for the sake of duty, which is possible only to persons of a rather high grade of cultivation, who, by the very possession of it, show that they may be, and deserve to be, trusted with political power in a more direct shape. Of all public functions which it is possible to confer on the poorer members of the community, this surely is the least calculated to kindle their feelings, and holds out least natural inducement to care for it, other than a virtuous determination to discharge conscientiously whatever duty one has to perform; and if the mass of electors cared enough about political

affairs to set any value on so limited a participation in them, they would not be likely to be satisfied without one much more extensive.

In the next place, admitting that a person who, from his narrow range of cultivation, can not judge well of the qualifications of a candidate for Parliament, may be a sufficient judge of the honesty and general capacity of somebody whom he may depute to choose a member of Parliament for him, I may remark, that if the voter acquiesces in this estimate of his capabilities, and really wishes to have the choice made for him by a person in whom he places reliance, there is no need of any constitutional provision for the purpose; he has only to ask this confidential person privately what candidate he had better vote for. In that case the two modes of election coincide in their result, and every advantage of indirect election is obtained under direct. The systems only diverge in their operation if we suppose that the voter would prefer to use his own judgment in the choice of a representative, and only lets another choose for him because the law does not allow him a more direct mode of action. But if this be his state of mind; if his will does not go along with the limitation which the law imposes, and he desires to make a direct choice, he can do so notwithstanding the law. He has only to choose as elector a known partisan of the candidate he prefers, or some one who will pledge himself to vote for that candidate. And this is so much the natural working of election by two stages, that, except in a condition of complete political indifference, it can scarcely be expected to act otherwise. It is in this way that the election of the President of the United States practically operates. Nominally, the election is indirect; the population at large does not vote for the President; it votes for electors who choose the President. But the electors are always chosen under an express engagement to vote for a particular candidate; nor does a citizen ever vote for an elector because of any preference for the man; he votes for the Breckinridge ticket or the Lincoln ticket. It must be remembered that the electors are not

chosen in order that they may search the country and find the fittest person in it to be President or to be a member of Parliament. There would be something to be said for the practice if this were so; but it is not so, nor ever will be, until mankind in general are of opinion, with Plato, that the proper person to be intrusted with power is the person most unwilling to accept it. The electors are to make choice of one of those who have offered themselves as candidates, and those who choose the electors already know who these are. If there is any political activity in the country, all electors who care to vote at all have made up their minds which of these candidates they would like to have, and will make that the sole consideration in giving their vote. The partisans of each candidate will have their list of electors ready, all pledged to vote for that individual; and the only question practically asked of the primary elector will be, which of these lists he will support.

The case in which election by two stages answers well in practice is when the electors are not chosen solely as electors, but have other important functions to discharge, which precludes their being selected solely as delegates to give a particular vote. This combination of circumstances exemplifies itself in another American institution, the Senate of the United States. That assembly, the Upper House, as it were, of Congress, is considered to represent not the people directly, but the States as such, and to be the guardian of that portion of their sovereign rights which they have not alienated. As the internal sovereignty of each state is, by the nature of an equal federation, equally sacred whatever be the size or importance of the state, each returns to the Senate the same number of members (two), whether it be little Delaware or the "Empire State" of New York. These members are not chosen by the population, but by the State Legislatures, themselves elected by the people of each state; but as the whole ordinary business of a legislative assembly, internal legislation and the control of the executive, devolves upon these

bodies, they are elected with a view to those objects more than to the other; and in naming two persons to represent the state in the federal Senate they for the most part exercise their own judgment, with only that general reference to public opinion necessary in all acts of the government of a democracy. The elections thus made have proved eminently successful, and are conspicuously the best of all the elections in the United States, the Senate invariably consisting of the most distinguished men among those who have made themselves sufficiently known in public life. After such an example, it can not be said that indirect popular election is never advantageous. Under certain conditions it is the very best system that can be adopted. But those conditions are hardly to be obtained in practice except in a federal government like that of the United States, where the election can be intrusted to local bodies whose other functions extend to the most important concerns of the nation. The only bodies in any analogous position which exist, or are likely to exist, in this country, are the municipalities, or any other boards which have been or may be created for similar local purposes. Few persons, however, would think it any improvement in our Parliamentary constitution if the members for the City of London were chosen by the aldermen and Common Council, and those for the borough of Marylebone avowedly, as they already are virtually, by the vestries of the component parishes. Even if those bodies, considered merely as local boards, were far less objectionable than they are, the qualities that would fit them for the limited and peculiar duties of municipal or parochial ædileship are no guaranty of any special fitness to judge of the comparative qualifications of candidates for a seat in Parliament. They probably would not fulfill this duty any better than it is fulfilled by the inhabitants voting directly; while, on the other hand, if fitness for electing members of Parliament had to be taken into consideration in selecting persons for the office of vestrymen or town councillors, many of those who are fittest for that more limited duty would inevitably be excluded from it, if only by the necessity there

would be of choosing persons whose sentiments in general politics agreed with those of the voters who elected them. The mere indirect political influence of town-councils has already led to a considerable perversion of municipal elections from their intended purpose, by making them a matter of party politics. If it were part of the duty of a man's book-keeper or steward to choose his physician, he would not be likely to have a better medical attendant than if he chose one for himself, while he would be restricted in his choice of a steward or book-keeper to such as might, without too great danger to his health, be intrusted with the other office.

It appears, therefore, that every benefit of indirect election which is attainable at all is attainable under direct; that such of the benefits expected from it as would not be obtained under direct election will just as much fail to be obtained under indirect; while the latter has considerable disadvantages peculiar to itself. The mere fact that it is an additional and superfluous wheel in the machinery is no trifling objection. Its decided inferiority as a means of cultivating public spirit and political intelligence has already been dwelt upon; and if it had any effective operation at all—that is, if the primary electors did to any extent leave to their nominees the selection of their Parliamentary representative, the voter would be prevented from identifying himself with his member of Parliament, and the member would feel a much less active sense of responsibility to his constituents. In addition to all this, the comparatively small number of persons in whose hands, at last, the election of a member of Parliament would reside, could not but afford great additional facilities to intrigue, and to every form of corruption compatible with the station in life of the electors. The constituencies would universally be reduced, in point of conveniences for bribery, to the condition of the small boroughs at present. It would be sufficient to gain over a small number of persons to be certain of being returned. If it be said that the electors would be responsible to those who

elected them, the answer is obvious, that, holding no permanent office or position in the public eye, they would risk nothing by a corrupt vote except what they would care little for, not to be appointed electors again: and the main reliance must still be on the penalties for bribery, the insufficiency of which reliance, in small constituencies, experience has made notorious to all the world. The evil would be exactly proportional to the amount of discretion left to the chosen electors. The only case in which they would probably be afraid to employ their vote for the promotion of their personal interest would be when they were elected under an express pledge, as mere delegates, to carry, as it were, the votes of their constituents to the hustings. The moment the double stage of election began to have any effect, it would begin to have a bad effect. And this we shall find true of the principle of indirect election however applied, except in circumstances similar to those of the election of senators in the United States.

It is unnecessary, as far as England is concerned, to say more in opposition to a scheme which has no foundation in any of the national traditions. An apology may even be expected for saying so much against a political expedient which perhaps could not, in this country, muster a single adherent. But a conception so plausible at the first glance, and for which there are so many precedents in history, might perhaps, in the general chaos of political opinions, rise again to the surface, and be brought forward on occasions when it might be seductive to some minds; and it could not, therefore, even if English readers were alone to be considered, be passed altogether in silence.

John Stuart Mill MP moves Personal Representation.

Note: Parliamentary speeches by Mill are edited from original Hansard reports on-line:
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PARLIAMENTARY REFORM— REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE (SCOTLAND) BILL— [BILL 29.]

COMMITTEE. ADJOURNED DEBATE.

HC Deb 31 May 1866 vol 183 cc1554-666

§ Debate resumed.

MR. J. STUART MILL Hon. Gentlemen opposite in considerable numbers have shown a very great desire to inform the House, not so much as to their views on the question before us, as with regard to what I have said or written upon the subject, and they have also shown a great desire to know the reasons I have for the course which they suppose I am going to take upon the question.

I should be sorry to refuse any hon. Gentleman so very small a request, but I must first of all correct a mistake made by the right hon. Baronet (Sir John Pakington) who has just sat down. I did not allow myself to be persuaded not to speak upon the Bill of my hon. Friend the Member for Hull (Mr. Clay). I had various reasons for the silence which I observed on that occasion. One of these I have the less hesitation in stating, because I think it is one with which the House will fully sympathize: a decided disinclination for being made a catspaw of. What other reasons I had may possibly appear in the

very few observations that I am now about to make, for the gratification of those hon. Gentlemen who show so much friendly concern for my consistency. No doubt it is a very flattering thing to find one's writings so much referred to and quoted; but any vanity I might have felt in consequence has been considerably dashed, by observing that hon. Gentlemen's knowledge of my writings is strictly limited to the particular passages which they quote. I suppose they found the books too dull to read any further. But if they had done me the honour to read on, they would have learnt a little more about my opinions than they seem to know. It may be that I have suggested plurality of votes and various other checks as proper parts of a general system of representation; but I should very much like to know where any Gentleman finds I have stated that checks and safeguards are required against a £7 franchise?

The proposals I made had reference to universal suffrage, of which I am a strenuous advocate. It appeared to me that certain things were necessary in order to prevent universal suffrage from degenerating into the mere ascendancy of a particular class. Is there any danger that the working class will acquire a numerical ascendancy by the reduction of the franchise qualification to £7? It is ridiculous to suppose such a thing. The effect of the present Bill will not be to create the ascendancy of a class, but to weaken and mitigate the ascendancy of a class; and there is no need for the particular checks which I suggested. I must, however, except one of them, which is equally desirable in any representative constitution: the representation of minorities; and I heartily congratulate the right hon. Baronet on the qualified adhesion which he has given to that principle.

It is not intended specially as a check on democracy: it is a check upon whatever portion of the community is strongest; on any abuse of power by the class that may chance to be uppermost. Instead of being opposed to democracy, it is actually a corollary from the democratic principle, for on that principle every one would have a

vote, and all votes would be of equal value; but without the representation of minorities all votes have not an equal value, for practically nearly one-half of the constituency is disfranchised, for the benefit, it may happen, not even of the majority, but of another minority. Suppose that a House of Commons is elected by a bare majority of the people, and that it afterwards passes laws by a bare majority of itself. The outvoted minority out of doors, and the outvoted minority of the Members of this House who were elected by the majority out of doors, might possibly agree; and thus a little more than one-fourth of the community would actually have defeated the remaining three-fourths.

On the principle of justice, therefore, and on the principle of democracy above all, the representation of minorities appears to me an absolutely necessary part of any representative constitution which it is intended should permanently work well. If the right hon.

Gentleman who has declared in favour of the representation of minorities (Sir John Pakington) will bring forward a Motion, in any form which can possibly pass, with a view to engraft that principle upon any Bill, I shall have the greatest pleasure in seconding him.

I desire to make a brief explanation in reference to a passage which the right hon. Gentleman has quoted from a portion of my writings, and which has some appearance of being less polite than I should wish always to be in speaking of a great party. What I stated was, that the Conservative party was, by the law of its constitution, necessarily the stupidest party. Now, I do not retract this assertion; but I did not mean that Conservatives are generally stupid; I meant, that stupid persons are generally Conservative. I believe that to be so obvious and undeniable a fact that I hardly think any hon.

Gentleman will question it. Now, if any party, in addition to whatever share it may possess of the ability of the community, has nearly the whole of its stupidity, that party, I apprehend, must by the law of its constitution be the stupidest party. And I do not see why hon.

Gentlemen should feel that position at all offensive to them; for it ensures their being always an extremely powerful party.

I know I am liable to a retort, an obvious one enough, and as I do not intend any hon. Gentleman to have the credit of making it, I make it myself. It may be said that if stupidity has a tendency to Conservatism, sciolism and half-knowledge have a tendency to Liberalism. Well, Sir, something might be said for that, but it is not at all so clear as the other. There is an uncertainty about half-informed people. You cannot count upon them. You cannot tell what their way of thinking may be. It varies from day to day, perhaps with the last book they have read. They are a less numerous class, and also an uncertain class. But there is a dense solid force in sheer stupidity - such, that a few able men, with that force pressing behind them, are assured of victory in many a struggle; and many a victory the Conservative party have owed to that force. I only rose for the purpose of making this personal explanation, and I do not intend to enter into the merits of the Amendment, especially as I concur in all that has been said in the admirable speech of my right hon. Friend the Member for London (Mr. Goschen).

J. STUART MILL said, the hon. Member for Nottingham (Mr. Osborne) had called on Gentlemen on that side to support the Motion of the hon. Member for Glasgow (Mr. Graham), holding out to them the inducement of getting rid of the principle of the representation of minorities. That was the strongest possible reason why those who were in favour of the representation of minorities - not as being a Conservative measure, but as a measure of justice - should vote against the present Motion. Nothing could be more unfair than to speak of the representation of those persons who happen to be in a minority, whatever might be their political opinions, in any constituency, as being in any exclusive sense a Conservative principle. On the contrary, it was not only the most democratic of all

principles, but it was the only true democratic principle of representation, and they could not have a complete system of representation without it, Man for man, those who happened to be in a minority had just as much claim to be represented as the majority.

Proportional Representation of minorities ensures majorities prevail but not unduly.

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5 July 1867. Commons Sitting. PARLIAMENTARY REFORM.
REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE BILL. [BILL 79.]
COMMITTEE.

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1068

§ Bill considered in Committee. § (In the Committee.) § New Clause (Power to distribute votes.) At any contested Election for a County or Borough represented by more than two Members, and having more than one seat vacant, every voter shall be entitled to a number of votes equal to the number of vacant seats, and may give all such votes to one candidate, or may distribute them among the candidates as he think fit. (Mr. Lowe.)

§ Question again proposed, "That the Clause be read a second time."

§ MR. J. STUART MILL

I hope my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham will forgive me if the highly Conservative speech which he has delivered, almost the first which I ever heard him deliver with which I could not sympathize, has not converted me from the eminently democratic opinions which I have held for a great number of years. I am very glad that my hon. Friend stated so candidly the extremely Conservative vein of thought and tone of feeling which is the foundation of his political feelings. It is true that it is almost as opposite a frame of mind from my own as it is possible to conceive; but, fortunately, in the case of most of the practical questions that we have to decide we draw nearly the same conclusions from our so different premises.

Nevertheless, I am extremely glad that my hon. Friend has shown that it is upon the principle of standing by old things, and resisting newfangled notions, that his antipathy to the proposal of my right hon. Friend the Member for Calne, which I most strongly support, has been derived. It is the less necessary that I should address the House at any length upon this question, because on a previous occasion I expressed myself strongly in favour of the principles upon some of which this Motion rests, and expressed my strong sense of the necessity for a change in our mode of election, directed in some degree to the same ends as those pointed out by this almost insignificant makeshift - a makeshift not, however, without considerable real efficacy, and resting in part upon the same principles upon which Mr. Hare's system of personal representation is founded.

There are two principles which we must mainly regard. In the first place, it appears to me that any body of persons who are united by any ties, either of interest or of opinion, should have, or should be able to have, if they desire it, influence and power in this House proportionate to that which they exercise out of it. This, of course,

excludes the idea of applying such a system as this to constituencies having only two Members, because in that case its application would render a minority of one-third equal to a majority.

The other principle upon which I support the representation of minorities is because I wish - although this may surprise some hon. Members - that the majority should govern. We heard a great deal formerly about the tyranny of the majority, but it appears to me that many hon. Gentlemen on both sides of the House are now reconciled to that tyranny, and are disposed to defend and maintain it against us democrats. My own opinion is, that any plan for the representation of minorities must operate in a very great degree to diminish and counteract the tyranny of majorities. I wish to maintain the just ascendancy of majorities, but this cannot be done unless minorities are represented.

The majority in this House is got at by the elimination of two minorities. You first eliminate at the election the minority out of the House, and then upon a division you eliminate the minority in the House. Now, it may very well happen that those combined minorities would greatly out-number the majority which prevails in this House, and consequently that the majority does not now govern. The true majority can only be maintained if all minorities are counted; if they are counted there is only one process of elimination, and only one minority left out.

Perhaps I may be allowed to answer one or two objections which have been made to the proposal of my right hon. Friend, The right hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary for the Colonies urged that, according to our constitution, representation should be by communities, and upon that subject he said several things with which it is impossible not to agree. But it seems to me that this is one of many remarkable proofs now offering themselves, that hon.

Gentlemen opposite, not content with coming to our opinions, are now adopting our arguments.

For instance, the right hon. Gentleman insisted upon the greatness of the mistake of supposing that the country was divided into a majority and a minority, instead of into majorities and minorities. I have said that myself I should think at least 500 times. The right hon. Gentleman said one thing that perfectly amazed me. He said, as we all admit, that it was wrong that the representative of any community should represent it only in a single aspect, should represent only one interest, only its Tory or its Liberal opinions; and he added that, at present, this was not the case, but that such a state of things would be produced by the adoption of this proposal.

I apprehend that then, even more than now, each party would desire to be represented, and would feel the importance of getting itself represented by those men who would be most acceptable to the general body of the constituency; and therefore on all other points, except that of being Liberals or Tories, those Members would represent the constituencies fully as much, if not more, than they do now.

The right hon. Gentleman thinks that the local communities ought to be represented as units, but that is not my opinion. For example, the right hon. Gentleman would contend that if a Member were elected by two-thirds of a constituency he ought to sit in that House as representing the whole. If that were the case they would evidently pass for what they are not. I have no idea of Members sitting in this House as the representatives of mere names of places, or bricks and mortar, or some particular part of the terrestrial globe, in different localities. What we want is the representation of the inhabitants of those places. If there should be a place in which two-thirds of the constituency are Conservative, and one-third Liberal, it is a falsehood to contend that the Conservative Member represents the

Liberals of that place.

On the other hand, if there were three Members for such a place, two of whom represented the majority, and the third the minority, there would be a full representation of the constituency, and certainly a far more accurate representation than if a man returned by a simple majority assumed to represent the whole constituency.

Another objection made and insisted upon by my hon. Friend below me, in one of the most eloquent parts of his speech, and in the spirit of which I quite agree, is that the effect of this system will be to put an end to contests at elections, and to all the instruction they afford, and all the public spirit and interest in public affairs which they excite. This appears to me to be an opinion, which only the extreme dislike that my hon. Friend professes for everything new in politics prevents him from seeing to be an entire mistake.

The fault which my hon. Friend and others find with the proposed mode of election is one that is in an eminent degree attributable to the existing system; because under that system wherever it is known from the state of the registration that one side is able to return all the Members, the other side now take little or no interest in the election, and therefore it will be evident that if those persons who cannot be represented in their own locality cannot obtain a representation elsewhere, representation, so far as they are concerned, will be a perfectly effete institution.

What is it that induces people when they are once beaten at an election to try again? Is it not the belief that possibly a change has taken place in the opinions of at least some of the electors, or that, at all events, there has been such a change in the general feeling of the constituency that there is some chance of their being returned, and therefore there is a sufficient motive to induce them to try again? But that motive never can exist under the present system where there is so great a discrepancy between the parties as two-thirds and

one-third, because in no case can one-third of the constituency ever hope to convert itself into a majority. What motive, then, is there for trying?

But under the new system, suppose the minority obtains one Member out of three, the minority can always try for the second seat, and precisely the same motive will exist if the parties should be nearly equal. Indeed, in such a case, the motive would be all the stronger, because then the majority will try to get all the members. What will be the case where there are three Members to be returned? The majority of two-thirds will only have two of the Members, and if any change in opinion takes place favourable to the minority they will always be in a position to bid for the third seat; so that I apprehend the healthy excitement of contest in an election, which follows from the existence of the motives which will induce persons to embark in the struggle, will be more certainly guaranteed by the more perfect representation of the constituency.

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It has been argued by my hon. Friend below me, and it has been several times insisted on by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that the Executive will be rendered very weak by the adoption of this principle, and I must own that there is some truth and justice in that argument. But the House cannot fail to perceive that so long as you give to the minority the same power as is possessed by the majority, it is perfectly clear that there may be a large majority of the constituency in favour of the Government, while there may be no majority in the House. At the present moment we do not care what majority the Government may have in the country; all that we want is to prevent it having a large majority in the House.

No one is more opposed to such a state of things than I am; but the practical application is, that we wish to prevent the Government having a large majority in the House, with a small majority in the country. That is the case in Australia, as was very strongly exemplified on the question of Free Trade and protection, and also in the United States, where there is a moderate difference in the constituencies between one party, and the other, but a very much greater difference in the House of Representatives.

When the right hon. Gentleman says that this system will make a weak Government, my answer is that it is not desirable that a Government should be a strong one, if it rests on a small majority of the constituencies; nor is it desirable that a Government should be lured on and deceived by a great majority in the House; because a very small change in the constituencies would be sufficient to deprive them of that majority, and it is not desirable that the policy of the Government should be tumbled about from one extreme to the other when the opinion of the constituency is almost equally divided between the two parties.

I quite agree with my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, that in revolutionary times it is necessary that a party should be as strong as possible while the fight lasts, since the sooner the fighting is over the better. But although in such a case there should be a decisive predominance, such times are exceptional, and circumstances do not apply which apply in ordinary and peaceful times. They are times for which we cannot legislate or adapt our ordinary institutions. Under such circumstances men may be obliged to dispense with all law, and, if necessary, to have a dictatorship in the hands of one man, but that is altogether an exceptional case,

I am extremely anxious that the feeling should not get abroad, from the circumstance of the right hon. Member for Calne having brought

forward this proposal, and from its being so largely supported by Gentlemen on the other side of the House, that this is essentially a Conservative "move," and is intended solely for the purpose of doing away, as far as possible with the effect of the Reform Bill now before us. I have always entertained these opinions, long before the introduction of this Reform Bill, and although I never supposed that I should see such a Reform as this adopted in my life, I have protested and reprobated oppression of this kind, on whichever side it has been practised.

The only reason why it can be said that it is brought forward as a Conservative measure, and in aid of Conservatives, is that it really operates in favour of those who are likely to be weakest; it is those who are in danger of being outnumbered and subjected to the tyranny of a majority who are protected. I have always been afraid that the Conservative party would not see the necessity of these things until they actually saw that it is their interest, and that they would not see it until the power has passed away to the other side. Had they taken up the question four or five years ago they might by this time have made it the general opinion of the country, and have led the masses of the people to be more just when their time came than they have been to them. Their eyes are not so soon opened to those things which appear to be against them as they are to those that are in their favour; but there are minds on the other side of the House quite capable of seeing the value and importance of the principle, and of representing it with such effect that ultimately the principle of the representation of minorities will be generally adopted.

30 May 1867. Commons Sitting. PARLIAMENTARY REFORM.
REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE BILL [BILL 79.]

Provisions of Mill amendment for personal representation.

JOHN STUART MILL , who had given Notice of an Amendment in line 27, to leave out all after "From and after the" and insert:

1. Passing of the present Bill, every local constituency shall, subject to the provisions hereinafter contained, return one Member for every quota of its registered electors actually voting at that election, such quota being a number equal to the quotient obtained by dividing by six hundred and fifty-eight the total number of votes polled throughout the kingdom at the same Election, and if such quotient be fractional, the integral number next less: Provided always, That where the number of votes given by the constituency shall not be equal to such quota, the quota may be completed by means of votes given by persons duly qualified as electors in any other part of the United Kingdom; and the candidate who shall have obtained such quota may notwithstanding be returned as Member for the said constituency if he shall have obtained a majority of the votes given therein as hereinafter mentioned.

(Elector to vote orally or by voting paper. Voting paper may state a succession of names in case those named in priority have obtained the quota:)

2. Every elector shall vote at his appointed polling place, either orally as heretofore or by a voting paper, and may on such voting paper state in numerical order the names of any of the candidates at such general Election at one of whom, taken in regular succession, the vote shall be given in case those named first or in priority on such

voting paper shall, before it comes to be appropriated, have obtained the quota; but no vote given orally shall be taken for more than one candidate, and no vote given on a voting paper shall be counted for more than one candidate: Provided, that nothing herein contained shall prevent the transmission of voting papers under the Act of the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth years of Victoria, chapter fifty-three.

(What candidates are to be returned as Members:)

3. The candidates returned as Members shall be all those respectively for whom a quota of votes shall have been polled, whether in one or more than one constituency; and if less than six hundred and fifty-eight candidates have such quota, then those for whom the next greater number of votes have been polled, until the number of six hundred and fifty-eight shall be completed; and such of the six hundred and fifty-eight candidates chosen as aforesaid as have the majority or greater number of votes in any local constituency shall be returned as Members for such constituency.

(Vacated seats to be filled up by the voters who returned the last Member:)

4. Any seat vacated by the acceptance of office, promotion to the peerage, or death of a Member, shall be filled by election by the body or majority of the body of voters by whose actual votes he was returned.

(Speaker to lay before Parliament rules for ascertaining the number of votes polled of the quota, and for regulating form of voting papers and declaring the names of the Members:)

5. The Speaker of the House of Commons shall cause to be framed and shall lay before Parliament such rules as may be necessary for ascertaining and for certifying to the returning officers the total

number of votes polled, and the number of the quota, for regulating the form of the voting papers, and the record, collection, and disposition thereof, and the appropriation of the same in the order of the names on each paper, the method to be observed in determining and declaring the six hundred and fifty-eight members who have respectively obtained the quota or number of votes nearest to the quota; and for carrying the provisions of this Act into effect in any matter not otherwise provided for; and such rules shall, if the House shall so resolve, be entered on the Journals, and the same, when so entered, with any amendment or amendments thereof, at any time adopted by the Resolution of the House, shall be observed and performed at all future Elections by all officers and persons to whose duties respectively the same relate.

The need for complete and direct representation.

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[J STUART MILL] said: Sir, the proposal to which I am about to call the attention of the House, and which I move as an Amendment to the redistribution clauses, because if it were adopted it would itself constitute a complete system of re-distribution, has been framed for the purpose of embodying a principle which has not yet been introduced into our discussions; a principle which is overlooked in the practical machinery of our constitution, and disregarded in most of the projects of constitutional reformers, but which I hold, nevertheless, to be most important to the beneficial working of representative government; and if while we are making great changes in our system of representation we omit to engraft this principle upon it, the advantages we obtain by our changes will be very much lessened, and whatever dangers they may be thought to

threaten us with, will be far greater and more real than they otherwise would be. And this I think I can establish by reasons so clear and conclusive, that, though I cannot expect to obtain at once the assent of the House, I do confidently hope to induce many Members of it to take the subject into serious consideration.

I cannot, indeed, hold out as an inducement that the principle I contend for is fitted to be a weapon of attack or defence for any political party. It is neither democratic nor aristocratic; neither Tory, Whig, nor Radical; or, let me rather say, it is all these at once; it is a principle of fair play to all parties and opinions without distinction; it helps no one party or section to bear down others, but is for the benefit of whoever is in danger of being borne down. It is therefore a principle in which all parties may concur, if they prefer permanent justice to a temporary victory; and I believe that what chiefly hinders them is that, as the principle has not yet found its way into the commonplaces of political controversy, many have never heard of it, and many others have heard just enough about it to misunderstand it.

In bringing this subject before the House, I am bound to prove two things: first, that there is a serious practical evil requiring remedy; and then, that the remedy I propose is practicable, and would be efficacious. I will first speak of the evil. It is a great evil; it is one which exists not only in our own, but in every other representative constitution; we are all aware of it; we all feel and acknowledge it in particular cases; it enters into all our calculations, and bears with a heavy weight upon us all. But as we have always been used to think of it as incurable, we think of it as little as we can; and are hardly aware how greatly it affects the whole course of our affairs, and how prodigious would be the gain to our policy, to our morality, to our civilization itself, if the evil were susceptible of a remedy.

This House and the country are now anxiously engaged, and certainly not a day too soon, in considering what can be done for the unrepresented. We are all discussing how many non-electors deserve to be represented, and in what mode to give them representation.

But my complaint is that the electors are not represented. The representation which they seem to have, and which we have been quarrelling about the extension of, is a most imperfect and insufficient representation, and this imperfect and insufficient representation is what we are offering to the new classes of voters whom we are creating.

Just consider. In every Parliament there is an enormous fraction of the whole body of electors who are without any direct representation; consisting of the aggregate of the minorities in all the contested elections, together with we know not what minorities in those which, from the hopelessness of success, have not even been contested. All these electors are as completely blotted out from the constituency, for the duration of that Parliament, as if they were legally disqualified; most of them, indeed, are blotted out indefinitely, for in the majority of cases those who are defeated once are likely to be defeated again.

Here therefore is a large portion of those whom the Constitution intends to be represented, a portion which cannot average less than a third, and may approximate to a half, who are virtually in the position of non-electors. But the local majorities, are they truly represented? In a certain rough way they are. They have a Member or Members who are on the same side with themselves in party politics; if they are Conservatives, they have a professed Conservative; if Liberals, a professed Liberal. This is something; it is a great deal, even; but is it everything? Is it of no consequence to an elector who it is that sits in Parliament as his representative, if only he does not sit on the wrong side of the House?

Sir, we need more than this. We all desire not only that there should be a sufficient number of Conservatives or of Liberals in the House, but that these should, as far as possible, be the best men of their respective parties; and the elector, for himself, desires to be represented by the man who has most of his confidence in all things, and not merely on the single point of fidelity to a party. Now, this is so entirely unattainable under the present system, that it seems like a dream even to think of it. As a rule, the only choice offered to the elector is between the two great parties.

There are only as many candidates of each party as there are seats to be filled; to start any others would divide the party, and in most cases ensure its defeat. And what determines who these candidates are to be? Sometimes the mere accident of being first in the field. Sometimes the fact of having stood and been defeated on some previous occasion, when the sensible men of the party did not engage in the contest, because they knew it to be hopeless. In general, half-a-dozen local leaders, who may be honest politicians, but who may be jobbing intriguers, select the candidate; and whether they are of the one kind or the other, their conduct is much the same: they select the gentleman who will spend most money; or, when this indispensable qualification is equally balanced, it answers best to propose somebody who has no opinions but the party ones; for every opinion which he has of his own, and is not willing to abnegate, will probably lose him some votes, and give the opposite party a chance.

How many electors are there, I wonder, in the United Kingdom who are represented by the person, whom, if they had a free choice, they would have themselves selected to represent them? In many constituencies, probably not one. I am inclined to think that almost the only electors who are represented exactly as they would wish to be are those who were bribed, for they really have got for their

Member the gentleman who bribed highest. Sometimes, perhaps, the successful candidate's own tenants would have voted for him in preference to anyone else, however wide a choice had been open to them. But in most cases the selection is the result of a compromise; even the leaders not proposing the man they would have liked best, but being obliged to concede something to the prejudices of other members of the party.

Local votes with recourse to national candidates.

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Having thus, as I think, made out a sufficient case of evil requiring remedy, let me at once state the remedy I propose. My proposal, then, is this: That votes should be received in every locality, for others than the local candidates. An elector who declines to vote for any of the three or four persons who offer themselves for his own locality, should be allowed to bestow his vote on any one who is a candidate anywhere, whether put up by himself or by others. If the elector avails himself of this privilege, he will naturally vote for the person he most prefers: the one person among all that are willing to serve, who would represent him best; and if there are found in the whole kingdom other electors, in the proper number, who fix their choice on the same person, that person should be declared duly elected.

Some number of electors there must be who may be considered entitled to one representative. What that number is, depends on the numbers of the House, compared with the total number of electors in the country. Suppose that there is one Member for every 5,000 registered electors, or one for every 3,000 actual voters: then every candidate who receives 3,000 votes would be returned to this

House, in whatever parts of the country his voters might happen to live. This is the whole of my proposal, as far as its substance is concerned. To give it effect, some subsidiary arrangements are necessary, which I shall immediately state.

But I must first notice an objection which presents itself on the thresh-hold, and has so formidable an appearance that it prevents many persons from giving any further consideration to the subject. It is objected that the plan destroys the local character of the representation. Every constituency, it is said, is a group having certain interests and feelings in common, and if you disperse these groups by allowing the electors to group themselves in other combinations, those interests and feelings will be deprived of their representation.

Now I fully admit that the interests and feelings of localities ought to be represented: and I add that they always will be represented; because those interests and feelings exist in the minds of the electors; and as the plan I propose has no effect but to give the freest and fullest play to the individual elector's own preferences, his local preferences are certain to exercise their proper amount of influence. I do not know what better guardian of a feeling can be wanted than the man who feels it, or how it is possible for a man to have a vote, and not carry his interests and feelings, local as well as general, with him to the polling-booth. Indeed, it may be set down as certain that the majority of voters in every locality will generally prefer to be represented by one of themselves, or one connected with the place by some special tie.

It is chiefly those who know themselves to be locally in a minority, and unable to elect a local representative of their opinions, who would avail themselves of the liberty of voting on the new principle. As far as the majority were concerned, the only effect would be that

their local leaders would have a greatly increased motive to find out and bring forward the best local candidate that could be had; because the electors, having the power of transferring their votes elsewhere, would demand a candidate whom they would feel it a credit to vote for. The average quality of the local representation would consequently be improved; but local interests and feelings would still be represented, as they cannot possibly fail to be, as long as every elector resides in a locality.

If, however, the House attaches any weight to this chimerical danger, I would most gladly accept by way of experiment a limited application of the new principle. Let every elector have the option of registering himself either as a local or as a general voter. Let the elections for every county or borough take place on the local registry, as they do at present. But let those who choose to register themselves as members of a national constituency have representatives allowed to them in proportion to their number; and let these representatives and no others be voted for on the new principle.

Preference voting for citizens representatives rather than just party flags. Imaginary difficulties.

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I will now state the additional but very simple arrangements required to enable the plan to work. Supposing 3,000 voters to be the number fixed upon as giving a claim to a representative, it is necessary that no more than this minimum number should be counted for any candidate; for otherwise a few very eminent or very popular names might engross nearly all the votes, and no other person might obtain

the required number, or any number that would justify his return. No more votes, then, being counted for any candidate than the number necessary for his election, the remainder of those who voted for him would lose their vote, unless they were allowed to put on their voting paper a second name, for whom the vote could be used if it was not wanted by the candidate who stood first. In case this second candidate also should not need the vote, the voter might add a third, or any greater number, in the order of his preference.

This is absolutely all that the elector would have to do, more than he does at present; and I think it must be admitted that this is not a difficult idea to master, and not beyond the comprehension of the simplest elector. The only persons on whom anything more troublesome would devolve are the scrutineers, who would have to sort the voting papers, and see for which of the names written in it each of them ought to be counted. A few simple rules would be necessary to guide the scrutineers in this process. My Amendment intrusts the duty of drawing up those rules to the judgment and experience of, the right hon. Gentleman who presides over our deliberations, subject to the approbation of the House.

Let me now ask hon. Members, Is there anything in all this, either incomprehensible, or insuperably difficult of execution? I can assure the House that I have not concealed any difficulty. I have given a complete, though a brief, account of what most hon. Members must have heard of, but few, I am afraid, know much about: the system of personal representation proposed by my eminent friend, Mr. Hare, a man distinguished by that union of large and enlightened general principles with an organizing intellect and a rare fertility of practical contrivance, which together constitute a genius for legislation.

People who have merely heard of Mr. Hare's plan have taken it into their heads that it is particularly hard to understand and difficult to

execute. But the difficulty is altogether imaginary. To the elector there is no difficulty at all; to the scrutineers, only that of performing correctly an almost mechanical operation. Mr. Hare, anxious to leave nothing vague or uncertain, has taken the trouble to discuss in his book the whole detail of the mode of sorting the voting papers. People glance at this, and because they cannot take it all in at a glance, it seems to them very mysterious. But when was there any Act of Parliament that could be understood at a glance? and how can gentlemen expect to understand the details of a plan, unless they first possess themselves of its principle?

If we were to read a description, for example, of the mode in which letters are sorted at the Post Office, would it not seem to us very complicated? Yet, among so vast a number of letters, how seldom is any mistake made. Is it beyond the compass of human ability to ascertain that the first and second names on a voting paper have been already voted for by the necessary quota, and that the vote must be counted for the third? And does it transcend the capacity of the agents of the candidates, the chief registrar, or a Committee of this House, to find out whether this simple operation has been honestly and correctly performed? If these are not insuperable difficulties, I can assure the House that they will find there are no others.

Many will think that I greatly over-estimate the importance of securing to every elector a direct representation; because those who are not represented directly are represented indirectly. If Conservatives are not represented in the Tower Hamlets, or Liberals in West Kent, there are plenty of Conservatives and Liberals returned elsewhere; and those who are defeated may console themselves by the knowledge that their party is victorious in many other places. Their party, yes; but is that all we have to look to? Is

representation of parties all we have a right to demand from our representative system?

If that were so, we might as well put up three flags inscribed with the words, Tory, Whig, and Radical, and let the electors make their choice among the flags: and when they have voted, let the leaders of the winning party select the particular persons who are to represent it. In this way we should have, I venture to say, an admirable representation of the three parties; all the seats which fell to the lot of each party would be filled by its steadiest and ablest adherents, by those who would not only serve the party best in the House, but do it most credit with the country. All political parties, merely as such, would be far better represented than they are now, when accidents of personal position have so great a share in determining who shall be the Liberal or who the Conservative Member for each place.

Why is it, then, that such a system of representation would be intolerable to us?

Sir, it is because we look beyond parties; because we care for something besides parties; because we know that the constitution does not exist for the benefit of parties, but of citizens; and we do not choose that all the opinions, feelings, and interests of all the members of the community should be merged in the single consideration of which party shall predominate. We require a House of Commons which shall be a fitting representative of all the feelings of the people, and not merely of their party feelings. We want all the sincere opinions and public purposes which are shared by a reasonable number of electors to be fairly represented here; and not only their opinions, but that they should be able to give effect by their vote to their confidence in particular men.

Then why, because it is a novelty, refuse to entertain the only mode in which it is possible to obtain this complete reflection in the House

of the convictions and preferences existing in the constituent body? By the plan I propose every elector would have the option of voting for the one British subject who best represented his opinions, and to whom he was most willing to intrust the power of judging for him on subjects on which his opinions were not yet formed.

Representation of variety and minorities moreover guarantees majority decisions.

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Sir, I have already made the remark, that this proposal is not specially Liberal, nor specially Conservative, but is, in the highest degree, both Liberal and Conservative; and I will substantiate this by showing that it is a legitimate corollary from the distinctive doctrines of both parties.

Let me first address myself to Conservatives. What is it that persons of Conservative feelings specially deprecate in a plan of Parliamentary reform? It is the danger that some classes in the nation may be swamped by other classes. What is it that we are warned against as the chief among the dangers of democracy? not untruly as democracy is vulgarly conceived and practised. It is that the single class of manual labourers would, by dint of numbers, outvote all other classes, and monopolise the whole of the Legislature.

But by the plan I propose no such thing could happen; no considerable minority could possibly be swamped; no interest, no feeling, no opinion, which numbered in the whole country a few thousand adherents, need be without a representation in due proportion to its numbers. It is true that by this plan a minority would

not be equivalent to a majority; a third of the electors could not outvote two-thirds, and obtain a majority of seats; but a third of the electors could always obtain a third of the seats; and these would probably be filled by men above the average in the influence which depends on personal qualities: for the voters who were outnumbered locally, would range the whole country for the best candidate, and would elect him without reference to anything but their personal confidence in him. The representatives of the minorities would, therefore, include many men whose opinion would carry weight even with the opposite party.

Then, again, it is always urged by Conservatives, and is one of the best parts of their creed, that the legislators of a nation should not all be men of the same stamp. A variety of feelings, interests, and prepossessions, should be found in this House; and it should contain persons capable of giving information and guidance on every topic of importance that is likely to arise. This advantage, we are often assured, has really been enjoyed under our present institutions, by which almost every separate class or interest which exists in the country is somehow represented, with one great exception, which we are now occupied in removing, that of manual labour. And this advantage many Conservatives think that we are now in danger of losing.

But the plan I propose ensures this variegated character of the representation in a degree never yet obtained, and guarantees its preservation under any possible extension of the franchise. Even universal suffrage, even the handing over of political predominance to the numerical majority of the whole people, would not then extinguish minorities. Every dissentient opinion would have the opportunity of making itself heard, and heard through the very best and most effective organs it was able to procure. We should not find the rich or the cultivated classes retiring from politics, as we are so

often told they do in America, because they cannot present themselves to any body of electors with a chance of being returned. Such of them as were known and respected out of their immediate neighbourhood would be elected in considerable numbers, if not by a local majority, yet by a union of local minorities; and instead of being deterred from offering themselves, it would be the pride and glory of such men to serve in Parliament; for what more inspiring position can there be for any man, than to be selected to fight the up-hill battle of unpopular opinions, in a public arena, against superior numbers? All, therefore, which the best Conservatives chiefly dread in the complete ascendancy of democracy, would be, if not wholly removed, at least diminished in a very great degree. These are the recommendations of the plan when looked at on its Conservative side.

Let us now look at it in its democratic aspect. I claim for it the support of all democrats as being the only true realization of their political principles. What is the principle of democracy? Is it not that everybody should be represented, and that everybody should be represented equally? Am I represented by a Member against whom I have voted, and am ready to vote again? Have all the voters an equal voice, when nearly half of them have had their representative chosen for them by the larger half? In the present mode of taking the suffrages nobody is represented but the majority. But that is not the meaning of democracy.

Honest democracy does not mean the displacement of one privileged class, and the instalment of another in a similar privilege because it is a more numerous or a poorer class. That would be a mere pretence of democratic equality. That is not what the working classes want. The working classes demand to be represented, not because they are poor, but because they are human. No working man whom I have conversed with desires that the richer classes

should be unrepresented, but only that their representation should not exceed what is due to their numbers: that all classes should have, man for man, an equal amount of representation. He does not desire that the majority should be alone represented. He desires that the majority should be represented by a majority, and the minority by a minority; and they only need to have it shown to them how this can be done.

But I will go further. It is not only justice to the minorities that is here concerned. Unless minorities are counted, the majority which prevails may be but a sham majority. Suppose that on taking a division in this House, you compelled a large minority to step aside, and counted no votes but those of the majority; whatever vote you then took would be decided by the majority of that majority. Does not every one see that this would often be deciding it by a minority? The mere majority of a majority may be a minority of the whole.

Now, what I have been hypothetically supposing to be done in this House, the present system actually does in the nation. It first excludes the minorities at all the elections. Not a man of them has any voice at all in determining the proceedings of Parliament. Well, now: if the Members whom the majorities returned were always unanimous, we should be certain that the majority in the nation had its way. But if the majorities, and the Members representing them, are ever divided, the power that decides is but the majority of a majority.

Two-fifths of the electors, let us suppose, have failed to obtain any representation. The representatives of the other three-fifths are returned to Parliament, and decide an important question by two to one. Supposing the representatives to express the mind of their constituents, the question has been decided by a bare two-fifths of the nation, instead of a majority of it. Thus the present system is no

more just to majorities than to minorities. It gives no guarantee that it is really the majority that preponderates. A minority of the nation, if it is a majority in the prevailing party, may outnumber and prevail over a real majority in the nation.

Majorities are never sure of outnumbering minorities unless every elector is counted: unless every man's vote is as effective as any other man's in returning a representative. No system but that which I am submitting to the House effects this, because it is the only system under which every vote tells, and every constituency is unanimous. This system, therefore, is equally required by the Conservative and by the Radical creeds. In practice, its chief operation would be in favour of the weakest; of those who were most liable to be outnumbered and oppressed.

Under the present suffrage it would operate in favour of the working classes. Those classes form the majority in very few of the constituencies, but they are a large minority in many, and if they amount, say to a third of the whole electoral body, this system would enable them to obtain a third of the representation. Under any suffrage approaching to universal, it would operate in favour of the propertied and of the most educated classes; and though it would not enable them to outvote the others, it would secure to them, and to the interests they represent, a hearing, and a just share in the representation.

**True vs false democracy of reconciling vs
conquering elections.
Suspicion of its perfection. Its early progress.**

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I am firmly persuaded, Sir, that all parties in this House and in the country, if they could but be induced to give their minds to the consideration of this proposal, would end by being convinced, not only that it is entirely consistent with their distinctive principles, but that it affords the only means by which all that is best in those principles can be practically carried out. It would be a healing, a reconciling measure: softening all political transitions, securing that every opinion, instead of conquering or being conquered by starts and shocks, and passing suddenly from having no power at all in Parliament to having too much, on the contrary, should wax or wane in political power in exact proportion to its growth or decline in the general mind of the country.

So perfectly does this system realize the idea of what a representative Government ought to be, that its perfection stands in its way, and is the great obstacle to its success. There is a natural prejudice against everything which professes much. Men are unwilling to think that any plan which promises a great improvement in human affairs, has not something quackish about it. I cannot much wonder at this prejudice, when I remember that no single number of a daily paper is published whose advertising columns do not contain a score of panaceas for all human ills; when, in addition to all the pamphlets which load our tables, every Member of this House, I suppose, daily receives private communications of plans by which the whole of mankind may at one stroke be made rich and prosperous, generally, I believe, by means of paper money.

But if this age is fertile in new nonsense, and in new forms of old nonsense, it is an age in which many great improvements in human affairs have really been made. It is also an age in which, whether we will or not, we are entering on new paths; we are surrounded by circumstances wholly without example in history; and the wonder would be if exigencies so new could be dealt with in a completely

satisfactory manner by the old means. We should therefore ill-discharge our duty if we obstinately refused to look into new proposals.

This, Sir, is not the mere crotchet of an individual. It has been very few years before the world, but already, by the mere force of reason, it has made important converts among the foremost public writers and public men in Germany, in France, in Switzerland, in Italy, in our Australian colonies, and in the United States. In one illustrious though small commonwealth, that of Geneva, a powerful association has been organized and is at work, under the presidency of one of the most eminent men in the Swiss federation, agitating for the reform of the constitution on this basis.

And what in our own country? Why, Sir, almost every thinking person I know who has studied this plan, or to whom it has been sufficiently explained, is for giving it at least a trial. Various modes have been suggested of trying it on a limited scale. With regard to the practical machinery proposed, neither I nor the distinguished author of the plan are wedded to its details, if any better can be devised. If the principle of the plan were admitted, a Committee or a Royal Commission could be appointed to consider and report on the best means of providing for the direct representation of every qualified voter; and we should have a chance of knowing if the end we have in view could be attained by any better means than those which we suggest. But without some plan of the kind it is impossible to have a representative system really adequate to the exigencies of modern society.

In all states of civilization, and in all representative systems, personal representation would be a great improvement; but at present, political power is passing, or is supposed to be in danger of passing, to the side of the most numerous and poorest class. Against this

class predominance, as against all other class predominance, the personal representation of every voter, and therefore the full representation of every minority, is the most valuable of all protections. Those who are anxious for safeguards against the evils they expect from democracy should not neglect the safeguard which is to be found in the principles of democracy itself. It is not only the best safeguard, but the surest and most lasting: because it combats the evils and dangers of false democracy by means of the true, and because every democrat who understands his own principles must see and feel its strict and impartial justice.

§ Amendment proposed, at page 4, line 27, after the word "the," to insert the words: Passing of the present Bill, every local constituency shall, subject to the provisions hereinafter contained, return one Member for every quota of its registered electors, actually voting at that election." (Mr. J. Stuart Mill.)

§ Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

MR JOHN STUART MILL said, he would obey what appeared to be the general wish of the House, and would not press his Amendment to a division; but there were many things which he might have said in reply if the temper of the House had permitted. He must, however, follow his hon. Friend behind him in thanking the noble Lord the Member for Stamford (Viscount Cranborne) for his able speech, and for the conviction he had expressed that statesmen must make up their minds to think upon this subject as the only way of getting over a difficulty that must be got over. He must also express his warm acknowledgments to the Chancellor of the Exchequer for the manner in which he had dealt with the question.

§ Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

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Extensions of the franchise.

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ELECTORAL FRANCHISE

Petition of women. Exclusion by sex in property qualifications..

MOTION FOR A RETURN.

HC Deb 17 July 1866 vol 184 cc996-8

Mr J Stuart Mill, in rising to move for an "Address for "Return of the number of Freeholders, Householders, and others in England and Wales who, fulfilling the conditions of property or rental prescribed by Law as the qualification for the Electoral Franchise, are excluded

from the Franchise by reason of their sex," said:

Sir, I rise to make the Motion of which I have given notice. After the petition which I had the honour of presenting a few weeks ago, the House would naturally expect that its attention would be called, however briefly, to the claim preferred in that document. The petition, and the circumstances attendant on its preparation, have, to say the least, greatly weakened the chief practical argument which we have been accustomed to hear against any proposal to admit women to the electoral franchise — namely, that few, if any, women desire it. Originating as that petition did entirely with ladies, without the instigation, and, to the best of my belief, without the participation of any person of the male sex in any stage of the proceedings, except the final one of its presentation to Parliament, the amount of response which became manifest, the number of signatures obtained in a very short space of time, not to mention the quality of many of those signatures, may not have been surprising to the ladies who promoted the petition, but was certainly quite unexpected by me.

I recognize in it the accustomed sign that the time has arrived when a proposal of a public nature is ripe for being taken into serious consideration — namely, when a word spoken on the subject is found to have been the expression of a silent wish pervading a great number of minds, and a signal given in the hope of rallying a few supporters is unexpectedly answered by many. It is not necessary to offer any justification for the particular Motion which I am about to make. When the complaint is made that certain citizens of this nation, fulfilling all the conditions and giving all the guarantees which the Constitution and the law require from those who are admitted to a voice in determining who shall be their rulers, are excluded from that privilege for what appears to them, and for what appears to me, an entirely irrelevant consideration, the least we can do is to ascertain what number of persons are affected by the grievance, and

how great an addition would be made to the constituency if this disability were removed. I should not have attempted more than this in the present Session, even if the recent discussions in reference to Reform had not been brought to an abrupt close. Even if the late Government had succeeded in its honourable attempt to effect an amicable compromise of the Reform question, any understanding or any wish which might have existed as to the finality, for a certain period, of that compromise, could not have effected such a proposal as this, the adoption of which would not be, in any sense of the term, a lowering of the franchise, and is not intended to disturb in any degree the distribution of political power among the different classes of society.

Indeed, hon. Gentlemen opposite seem to think, and I suppose they are the best judges, that this concession, assuming it to be made, if it had any effect on party politics at all, would be favourable to their side; and the right hon. Member for Dublin University, in his humorous manner, advised me on that ground to withdraw this article from my political programme; but I cannot, either in jest or in earnest, adopt his suggestion, for I am bound to consider the permanent benefit of the community before the temporary interest of a party; and I entertain the firmest conviction that whatever holds out an inducement to one-half of the community to exercise their minds on the great social and political questions which are discussed in Parliament, and whatever causes the great influence they already possess to be exerted under the guidance of greater knowledge, and under a sense of responsibility, cannot be ultimately advantageous to the Conservative or any other cause, except so far as that cause is a good one.

And I rejoice in the knowledge that in the estimation of many hon. Gentlemen of the party opposite, the proposal made in the petition is, like many of the most valuable Reforms, as truly Conservative, as

I am sure it is truly Liberal. I listened with pleasure and gratitude to the right hon. Gentleman who is now Chancellor of the Exchequer, when in his speech on the second reading of the Reform Bill, he said he saw no reason why women of independent means should not possess the electoral franchise, in a country where they can preside in manorial courts and fill parish offices—to which let me add, and the Throne.

For The Enfranchisement of women.

PARLIAMENTARY REFORM — REPRESENTATION OF THE
PEOPLE BILL — [BILL 79.] — COMMITTEE.

CLAUSES 3, 4. [PROGRESS MAY 17.]

HC Deb 20 May 1867 vol 187 cc779-852

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MR. J. STUART MILL

I rise, Sir, to propose an extension of the suffrage which can excite no party or class feeling in this House; which can give no umbrage to the keenest asserter of the claims either of property or of numbers; an extension which has not the smallest tendency to disturb what we have heard so much about lately, the balance of political power, which cannot afflict the most timid alarmist with revolutionary terrors, or offend the most jealous democrat as an infringement of popular rights, or a privilege granted to one class of society at the expense of another. There is nothing to distract our attention from the simple question, whether there is any adequate justification for continuing to exclude an entire half of the community, not only from admission, but from the capability of being ever admitted within the pale of the Constitution, though they may fulfil all the conditions legally and constitutionally sufficient in every case but theirs.

Sir, within the limits of our Constitution this is a solitary case. There is no other example of an exclusion which is absolute. If the law denied a vote to all but the possessors of £5,000 a year, the poorest

man in the nation might — and now and then would — acquire the suffrage; but neither birth, nor fortune, nor merit, nor exertion, nor intellect, nor even that great disposer of human affairs, accident, can ever enable any woman to have her voice counted in those national affairs which touch her and hers as nearly as any other person in the nation.

Nor, Sir, before going any further, allow me to say that a *primâ facie* case is already made out. It is not just to make distinctions, in rights and privileges, without a positive reason. I do not mean that the electoral franchise, or any other public function, is an abstract right, and that to withhold it from any one, on sufficient grounds of expediency, is a personal wrong; it is a complete misunderstanding of the principle I maintain, to confound this with it; my argument is entirely one of expediency. But there are different orders of expediency; all expediencies are not exactly on the same level; there is an important branch of expediency called justice; and justice, though it does not necessarily require that we should confer political functions on every one, does require that we should not, capriciously and without cause, withhold from one what we give to another.

As was most truly said by my right hon. Friend the Member for South Lancashire, in the most misunderstood and misrepresented speech I ever remember; to lay a ground for refusing the suffrage to any one, it is necessary to allege either personal unfitness or public danger. Now, can either of these be alleged in the present case? Can it be pretended that women who manage an estate or conduct a business — who pay rates and taxes, often to a large amount, and frequently from their own earnings — many of whom are responsible heads of families, and some of whom, in the capacity of schoolmistresses, teach much more than a great number of the male electors have ever learnt — are not capable of a function of which every male householder is capable? Or is it feared that if they were admitted to

the suffrage they would revolutionize the State — would deprive us of any of our valued institutions, or that we should have worse laws, or be in any way whatever worse governed through the effect of their suffrages?

No one, Sir, believes anything of the kind. And it is not only the general principles of justice that are infringed, or at least set aside, by the exclusion of women, merely as women, from any share in the representation; that exclusion is also repugnant to the particular principles of the British Constitution. It violates one of the oldest of our constitutional maxims — a doctrine dear to Reformers, and theoretically acknowledged by most Conservatives — that taxation and representation should be co-extensive. Do not women pay taxes? Does not every woman who is *sui juris* contribute exactly as much to the revenue as a man who has the same electoral qualification? If a stake in the country means anything, the owner of freehold or leasehold property has the same stake, whether it is owned by a man or a woman. There is evidence in our constitutional records that women have voted, in counties and in some boroughs, at former, though certainly distant, periods of our history.

The House, however, will doubtless expect that I should not rest my case solely on the general principles either of justice or of the Constitution, but should produce what are called practical arguments. Now, there is one practical argument of great weight, which, I frankly confess, is entirely wanting in the case of women; they do not hold great meetings in the Parks, or demonstrations at Islington. How far this omission may be considered to invalidate their claim, I will not undertake to decide; but other practical arguments, practical in the most restricted meaning of the term, are not wanting; and I am prepared to state them, if I may be permitted first to ask, what are the practical objections? The difficulty which most people feel on this subject is not a practical objection; there is nothing

practical about it, it is a mere feeling — a feeling of strangeness; the proposal is so new; at least they think so, though this is a mistake; it is a very old proposal.

Well, Sir, strangeness is a thing which wears off; some things were strange enough to many of us three months ago which are not at all so now; and many are strange now, which will not be strange to the same persons a few years hence, or even, perhaps, a few months. And as for novelty, we live in a world of novelties; the despotism of custom is on the wane; we are not now satisfied with knowing what a thing is, we ask whether it ought to be; and in this House at least, I am bound to believe that an appeal lies from custom to a higher tribunal, in which reason is judge. Now, the reasons which custom is in the habit of giving for itself on this subject are usually very brief. That, indeed, is one of my difficulties; it is not easy to refute an interjection; interjections, however, are the only arguments among those we usually hear on this subject, which it seems to me at all difficult to refute. The others mostly present themselves in such aphorisms as these:— Politics are not women's business, and would distract them from their proper duties; women do not desire the suffrage, but would rather be without it; women are sufficiently represented by the representation of their male relatives and connections; women have power enough already. I shall probably be thought to have done enough in the way of answering, if I answer all this; and it may, perhaps, instigate any hon. Gentleman who takes the trouble of replying to me, to produce something more recondite. Politics, it is said, are not a woman's business.

Well, Sir, I rather think that politics are not a man's business either; unless he is one of the few who are selected and paid to devote their time to the public service, or is a Member of this or of the other House. The vast majority of male electors have each his own business which absorbs nearly the whole of his time; but I have not

heard that the few hours occupied, once in a few years, in attending at a polling-booth, even if we throw in the time spent in reading newspapers and political treatises, ever causes them to neglect their shops or their counting-houses. I have never understood that those who have votes are worse merchants, or worse lawyers, or worse physicians, or even worse clergymen than other people. One would almost suppose that the British Constitution denied a vote to every one who could not give the greater part of his time to politics; if this were the case we should have a very limited constituency.

But allow me to ask, what is the meaning of political freedom? Is it anything but the control of those who do make their business of politics, by those who do not? Is it not the very essence of constitutional liberty, that men come from their looms and their forges to decide, and decide well, whether they are properly governed, and whom they will be governed by? And the nations which prize this privilege the most, and exercise it most fully, are invariably those who excel the most in the common concerns of life. The ordinary occupations of most women are, and are likely to remain, principally domestic; but the notion that these occupations are incompatible with the keenest interest in national affairs, and in all the great interests of humanity, is as utterly futile as the apprehension, once sincerely entertained, that artizans would desert their workshops and their factories if they were taught to read.

I know there is an obscure feeling — a feeling which is ashamed to express itself openly — as if women had no right to care about anything, except how they may be the most useful and devoted servants of some man. But as I am convinced that there is not a single Member of this House, whose conscience accuses him of so mean a feeling, I may say without offence, that this claim to confiscate the whole existence of one half of the species for the supposed convenience of the other, appears to me, independently of

its injustice, particularly silly. For who that has had ordinary experience of human affairs, and ordinary capacity of profiting by that experience, fancies that those do their own work best who understand nothing else?

A man has lived to little purpose who has not learnt that without general mental cultivation, no particular work that requires understanding is ever done in the best manner. It requires brains to use practical experience; and brains, even without practical experience, go further than any amount of practical experience without brains. But perhaps it is thought that the ordinary occupations of women are more antagonistic than those of men are to the comprehension of public affairs. It is thought, perhaps, that those who are principally charged with the moral education of the future generations of men, cannot be fit to form an opinion about the moral and educational interests of a people; and that those whose chief daily business is the judicious laying-out of money, so as to produce the greatest results with the smallest means, cannot possibly give any lessons to right hon. Gentlemen on the other side of the House or on this, who contrive to produce such singularly small results with such vast means.

I feel a degree of confidence, Sir, on this subject, which I could not feel, if the political change, in itself not great or formidable, which I advocate, were not grounded, as beneficent and salutary political changes almost always are, upon a previous social change. The notion of a hard and fast line of separation between women's occupations and men's — of forbidding women to take interest in the things which interest men — belongs to a gone-by state of society which is receding further and further into the past. We talk of political revolutions, but we do not sufficiently attend to the fact that there has taken place around us a silent domestic revolution; women and men are, for the first time in history, really each other's companions. Our

traditions respecting the proper relations between them have descended from a time when their lives were apart — when they were separate in their thoughts, because they were separate equally in their amusements and in their serious occupations. In former days a man passed his life among men; all his friendships, all his real intimacies, were with men; with men alone did he consult on any serious business; the wife was either a plaything, or an upper servant.

All this, among the educated classes, is now changed. The man no longer gives his spare hours to violent outdoor exercises and boisterous conviviality with male associates; the two sexes now pass their lives together; the women of a man's family are his habitual society; the wife is his chief associate, his most confidential friend, and often his most trusted adviser. Now, does a man wish to have for his nearest companion so closely linked with him, and whose wishes and preferences have so strong a claim on him, one whose thoughts are alien to those which occupy his own mind — one who can neither be a help, a comfort, nor a support, to his noblest feelings and purposes? Is this close and almost exclusive companionship compatible with women's being warned off all large subjects — being taught that they ought not to care for what it is men's duty to care for, and that to have any serious interests outside the household is stepping beyond their province? Is it good for a man to live in complete communion of thoughts and feelings with one who is studiously kept inferior to himself, whose earthly interests are forcibly confined within four walls, and who cultivates, as a grace of character, ignorance and indifference about the most inspiring subjects, those among which his highest duties are cast? Does any one suppose that this can happen without detriment to the man's own character?

Sir, the time is now come when, unless women are raised to the level of men, men will be pulled down to theirs. The women of a man's family are either a stimulus and a support to his highest aspirations, or a drag upon them. You may keep them ignorant of politics, but you cannot prevent them from concerning themselves with the least respectable part of politics — its personalities; if they do not understand and cannot enter into the man's feelings of public duty, they do care about his personal interest, and that is the scale into which their weight will certainly be thrown. They will be an influence always at hand, co-operating with the man's selfish promptings, lying in wait for his moments of moral irresolution, and doubling the strength of every temptation. Even if they maintain a modest forbearance, the mere absence of their sympathy will hang a dead-weight on his moral energies, making him unwilling to make sacrifices which they will feel, and to forego social advantages and successes in which they would share, for objects which they cannot appreciate. Supposing him fortunate enough to escape any actual sacrifice of conscience, the indirect effect on the higher parts of his own character is still deplorable. Under an idle notion that the beauties of character of the two sexes are mutually incompatible, men are afraid of manly women; but those who have considered the nature and power of social influences well know, that unless there are manly women, there will not much longer be manly men. When men and women are really companions, if women are frivolous, men will be frivolous; if women care for nothing but personal interest and idle vanities, men in general will care for little else; the two sexes must now rise or sink together.

It may be said that women may take interest in great public questions without having votes; they may, certainly; but how many of them will? Education and society have exhausted their power in inculcating on women that their proper rule of conduct is what society expects from them; and the denial of the vote is a

proclamation intelligible to every one, that whatever else society may expect, it does not expect that they should concern themselves with public interests. Why, the whole of a girl's thoughts and feelings are toned down by it from her schooldays; she does not take the interest even in national history which her brothers do, because it is to be no business of hers when she grows up. If there are women — and now happily there are many — who do interest themselves in these subjects, and do study them, it is because the force within is strong enough to bear up against the worst kind of discouragement, that which acts not by interposing obstacles, which may be struggled against, but by deadening the spirit which faces and conquers obstacles.

We are told, Sir, that women do not wish for the suffrage. If the fact were so, it would only prove that all women are still under this deadening influence; that the opiate still benumbs their mind and conscience. But great numbers of women do desire the suffrage, and have asked for it by petitions to this House. How do we know how many more thousands there may be who have not asked for what they do not hope to get; or for fear of what may be thought of them by men, or by other women; or from the feeling, so sedulously cultivated in them by their education — aversion to make themselves conspicuous? Men must have a rare power of self-delusion, if they suppose that leading questions put to the ladies of their family or of their acquaintance will elicit their real sentiments, or will be answered with complete sincerity by one woman in 10,000. No one is so well schooled as most women are in making a virtue of necessity; it costs little to disclaim caring for what is not offered; and frankness in the expression of sentiments which may be displeasing and may be thought uncomplimentary to their nearest connections, is not one of the virtues which a woman's education tends to cultivate, and is, moreover, a virtue attended with sufficient risk, to induce prudent

women usually to reserve its exercise for cases in which there is a nearer and a more personal interest at stake.

However this may be, those who do not care for the suffrage will not use it; either they will not register, or if they do, they will vote as their male relatives advise — by which, as the advantage will probably be about equally shared among all classes, no harm will be done.

Those, be they few or many, who do value the privilege, will exercise it, and will receive that stimulus to their faculties, and that widening and liberalizing influence over their feelings and sympathies, which the suffrage seldom fails to produce on those who are admitted to it.

Meanwhile an unworthy stigma would be removed from the whole sex. The law would cease to declare them incapable of serious things; would cease to proclaim that their opinions and wishes are unworthy of regard, on things which concern them equally with men, and on many things which concern them much more than men. They would no longer be classed with children, idiots, and lunatics, as incapable of taking care of either themselves or others, and needing that everything should be done for them, without asking their consent. If only one woman in 20,000 used the suffrage, to be declared capable of it would be a boon to all women. Even that theoretical enfranchisement would remove a weight from the expansion of their faculties, the real mischief of which is much greater than the apparent.

Then it is said, that women do not need direct power, having so much indirect, through their influence over their male relatives and connections. I should like to carry this argument a little further. Rich people have a great deal of indirect influence. Is this a reason for refusing them votes? Does any one propose a rating qualification the wrong way, or bring in a Reform Bill to disfranchise all who live in a £500 house, or pay £100 a year indirect taxes? Unless this rule for

distributing the franchise is to be reserved for the exclusive benefit of women, it would follow that persons of more than a certain fortune should be allowed to bribe, but should not be allowed to vote.

Sir, it is true that women have great power. It is part of my case that they have great power; but they have it under the worst possible conditions because it is indirect, and therefore irresponsible. I want to make this great power a responsible power. I want to make the woman feel her conscience interested in its honest exercise. I want her to feel that it is not given to her as a mere means of personal ascendancy. I want to make her influence work by a manly interchange of opinion, and not by cajolery. I want to awaken in her the political point of honour. Many a woman already influences greatly the political conduct of the men connected with her, and sometimes, by force of will, actually governs it; but she is never supposed to have anything to do with it; the man whom she influences, and perhaps misleads, is alone responsible; her power is like the back-stairs influence of a favourite.

Sir, I demand that all who exercise power should have the burden laid on them of knowing something about the things they have power over. With the acknowledged right to a voice, would come a sense of the corresponding duty. Women are not usually inferior in tenderness of conscience to men. Make the woman a moral agent in these matters; show that you expect from her a political conscience; and when she has learnt to understand the transcendent importance of these things, she will know why it is wrong to sacrifice political convictions to personal interest or vanity; she will understand that political integrity is not a foolish personal crotchet, which a man is bound, for the sake of his family, to give up, but a solemn duty; and the men whom she can influence will be better men in all public matters, and not, as they often are now, worse men by the whole amount of her influence. But at least, it will be said, women do not

suffer any practical inconvenience, as women, by not having a vote. The interests of all women are safe in the hands of their fathers, husbands, and brothers, who have the same interest with them, and not only know, far better than they do, what is good for them, but care much more for them than they care for themselves.

Sir, this is exactly what is said of all unrepresented classes. The operatives, for instance; are they not virtually represented by the representation of their employers? Are not the interest of the employers and that of the employed, when properly understood, the same? To insinuate the contrary, is it not the horrible crime of setting class against class? Is not the farmer equally interested with the labourer in the prosperity of agriculture — the cotton manufacturer equally with his workmen in the high price of calicoes? Are they not both interested alike in taking off taxes? And, generally, have not employers and employed a common interest against all outsiders, just as husband and wife have against all outside the family? And what is more, are not all employers good, kind, benevolent men, who love their workpeople, and always desire to do what is most for their good? All these assertions are as true, and as much to the purpose, as the corresponding assertions respecting men and women.

Sir, we do not live in Arcadia, but, as we were lately reminded, in fæce Romuli: and in that region workmen need other protection than that of their employers, and women other protection than that of their men. I should like to have a Return laid before this House of the number of women who are annually beaten to death, kicked to death, or trampled to death by their male protectors; and, in an opposite column, the amount of the sentences passed in those cases in which the dastardly criminals did not get off altogether. I should also like to have, in a third column, the amount of property, the unlawful taking of which was, at the same sessions or assizes, by the same judge, thought worthy of the same amount of

punishment. We should then have an arithmetical estimate of the value set by a male legislature and male tribunals on the murder of a woman, often by torture continued through years, which, if there is any shame in us, would make us hang our heads.

Sir, before it is affirmed that women do not suffer in their interests, as women, by the denial of a vote, it should be considered whether women have no grievances; whether the laws, and those practices which laws can reach, are in every way as favourable to women as to men. Now, how stands the fact? In the matter of education, for instance. We continually hear that the most important part of national education is that of mothers, because they educate the future men. Is this importance really attached to it? Are there many fathers who care as much, or are willing to expend as much, for the education of their daughters as of their sons? Where are the Universities, where the high schools, or the schools of any high description, for them? If it be said that girls are better educated at home, where are the training-schools for governesses? What has become of the endowments which the bounty of our ancestors destined for the education, not of one sex only, but of both indiscriminately? I am told by one of the highest authorities on the subject, that in the majority of the endowments the provision made is not for boys, but for education generally; in one great endowment, Christ's Hospital, it is expressly for both; that institution now maintains and educates 1,100 boys, and exactly twenty-six girls. And when they attain womanhood, how does it fare with that great and increasing portion of the sex, who, sprung from the educated classes, have not inherited a provision, and not having obtained one by marriage, or disdaining to marry merely for a provision, depend on their exertions for subsistence? Hardly any decent educated occupation, save one, is open to them. They are either governesses or nothing.

A fact has recently occurred, well worthy of commemoration in connection with this subject. A young lady, Miss Garrett, from no pressure of necessity, but from an honourable desire to employ her activity in alleviating human suffering, studied the medical profession. Having duly qualified herself, she, with an energy and perseverance which cannot be too highly praised, knocked successively at all the doors through which, by law, access is obtained into the medical profession. Having found all other doors fast shut, she fortunately discovered one which had accidentally been left ajar. The Society of Apothecaries, it seems, had forgotten to shut out those who they never thought would attempt to come in, and through this narrow entrance this young lady found her way into this profession. But so objectionable did it appear to this learned body that women should be the medical attendants even of women, that the narrow wicket through which Miss Garrett entered has been closed after her, and no second Miss Garrett will be allowed to pass through it. And this is *instar omnium*.

No sooner do women show themselves capable of competing with men in any career, than that career, if it be lucrative or honourable, is closed to them. A short time ago women might be associates of the Royal Academy; but they were so distinguishing themselves, they were assuming so honourable a place in their art, that this privilege also has been withdrawn. This is the sort of care taken of women's interests by the men who so faithfully represent them. This is the way we treat unmarried women. And how is it with the married? They, it may be said, are not interested in this Motion; and they are not directly interested; but it interests, even directly, many who have been married, as well as others who will be. Now, by the common law of England, all that a wife has, belongs absolutely to the husband; he may tear it all from her, squander every penny of it in debauchery, leave her to support by her labour herself and her children, and if by heroic exertion and self-sacrifice she is able to put

by something for their future wants, unless she is judicially separated from him he can pounce down upon her savings, and leave her penniless. And such cases are of quite common occurrence.

Sir, if we were besotted enough to think these things right, there would be more excuse for us; but we know better. The richer classes take care to exempt their own daughters from the consequences of this abominable state of the law. By the contrivance of marriage settlements, they are able in each case to make a private law for themselves, and they invariably do so. Why do we not provide that justice for the daughters of the poor, which we take care to provide for our own daughters? Why is not that which is done in every case that we personally care for, made the law of the land, so that a poor man's child whose parents could not afford the expense of a settlement, may retain a right to any little property that may devolve on her, and may have a voice in the disposal of her own earnings, which, in the case of many husbands, are the best and only reliable part of the incomings of the family?

I am sometimes asked what practical grievances I propose to remedy by giving women a vote. I propose, for one thing, to remedy this. I give these instances to prove that women are not the petted children of society which many people seem to think they are — that they have not the overabundance, the superfluity of power that is ascribed to them, and are not sufficiently represented by the representation of the men who have not had the heart to do for them this simple and obvious piece of justice.

Sir, grievances of less magnitude than the law of the property of married women, when suffered by parties less inured to passive submission, have provoked revolutions. We ought not to take advantage of the security we feel against any such consequence in the present case, to withhold from a limited number of women that moderate amount of participation in the enactment and improvement

of our laws, which this Motion solicits for them, and which would enable the general feelings of women to be heard in this House through a few male representatives. We ought not to deny to them, what we are conceding to everybody else — a right to be consulted; the ordinary chance of placing in the great Council of the nation a few organs of their sentiments — of having, what every petty trade or profession has, a few members who feel specially called on to attend to their interests, and to point out how those interests are affected by the law, or by any proposed changes in it. No more is asked by this Motion; and when the time comes, as it certainly will come, when this will be granted, I feel the firmest conviction that you will never repent of the concession.

§ Amendment proposed, in page 2, line 16, to leave out the word "man," in order to insert the word "person," — Mr. Mill, — instead thereof.

MR. J. STUART MILL

I will merely say, in answer to the noble Lord who requested me to withdraw the Motion, that I am a great deal too well pleased with the speeches that have been made against it — his own included — to think of withdrawing it. There is nothing that has pleased me more in those speeches than to find that every one who has attempted to argue at all, has argued against something which is not before the House: they have argued against the admission of married women, which is not in the Motion; or they have argued against the admission of women as Members of this House; or again, as the hon. Member for the Wick boroughs (Mr. Laing) has done, they have argued against allowing women to be generals and officers in the army; a question which I need scarcely say is not before the House. I certainly do think that when we come to universal suffrage, as

some time or other we probably shall come — if we extend the vote to all men, we should extend it to all women also. So long, however, as you maintain a property qualification, I do not propose to extend the suffrage to any women but those who have the qualification. If, as is surmised by one of the speakers, young ladies should attach so much value to the suffrage that they should be unwilling to divest themselves of it in order to marry, I can only say that if they will not marry without it, they will probably be allowed to retain it. As to any question that may arise in reference to the removal of any other disabilities of women, it is not before the House. There are evidently many arguments and many considerations that cannot be overlooked in dealing with these larger questions, but which do not arise on the present Motion, and on which, therefore, it is not necessary that I should comment. I will only say that if we should in the progress of experience — especially after experience of the effect of granting the suffrage — come to the decision that married women ought to have the suffrage, or that women should be admitted to any employment or occupation which they are not now admitted to — if it should become the general opinion that they ought to have it, they will have it.

§ Question put, "That the word 'man' stand part of the Clause."

§ The Committee divided:— Ayes 196; Noes 73: Majority 123.

AYES.

Acland, T. D.	Campbell, A. H.
Adam, W. P.	Candlish, J.
Adderley, rt. hon. C. B.	Capper, C.
Annesley, hon. Col. H.	Cardwell, rt. hon. E.
Ayrton, A. S.	Cartwright, Colonel
Bagge, Sir W.	Cave, rt. hon. S.

Baillie, rt. hon. H. J.	Cecil, Lord E. H. B. G.
Barnett, H.	Chambers, T.
Beach, Sir M. H.	Clay, J.
Beaumont, W. B.	Cole, hon. J. L.
Bernard, hon. Col. H. B.	Colebrooke, Sir T. E.
Blennerhasset, Sir R.	Collier, Sir R. P.
Bourne, Colonel	Colville, C. R.
Brett, W. B.	Conolly, T.
Briscoe, J. I.	Corry, rt. hon. H. L.
Brooks, R.	Cox, W. T.
Brown, J.	Crawford, R. W.
Browne, Lord J. T.	Cubitt, G.
Bruce, Lord C.	Dalkeith, Earl of
Bruen, H.	Dering, Sir E. C.
Buckley, E.	Dick, F.
Bulkeley, Sir R.	Dickson, Major A. G.
Buller, Sir E. M.	Dillwyn, L. L.
Burrell, Sir P.	Dimsdale, R.
Buxton, Sir T. F.	Dunkellin, Lord
Dunne, General	Monk, C. J.
Du Pre, C. G.	Montagu, rt. hn. Lord R.
Dyott, Colonel R.	Montgomery, Sir G.
Eckersley, N.	Morgan, O.
Edwards, Sir H.	Mowbray, rt. hon. J. R.
Egerton, Sir P. G.	Naas, Lord
Egerton, hon. A. F.	Neate, C.
Egerton, E. C.	Newdegate, C. N.
Egerton, hon. W.	Newport, Viscount
Enfield, Viscount	Nicholson, W.
Esmonde, J.	Nicol, J.D.
Evans, T. W.	Noel, hon. G. J.
Ewing, H. E. Crum-	O'Reilly, M. W.

Fellowes, E.	Packe, C. W.
Fergusson, Sir J.	Packe, Colonel
Floyer, J.	Pakington, rt. hn. Sir J.
Foljambe, F. J. S.	Parker, Major W.
Freshfield, C. K.	Pease, J. W.
Gallwey, Sir W. P.	Peel, rt. hon. Sir R.
Gaselee, Serjeant S.	Potter, E.
Getty, S. G.	Powell, F. S.
Gilpin, C.	Price, R. G.
Gladstone, rt. hn. W. E.	Price, W. P.
Glyn, G. G.	Pugh, D.
Goddard, A. L.	Read, C. S.
Gore, J. R. O.	Rebow, J. G.
Gore, W. R. O.	Repton, G. W. J.
Graves, S. R.	Ridley, Sir M. W.
Gray, Lieut.-Colonel	Robertson, P. F.
Greenall, G.	Roebuck, J. A.
Greene, E.	Rolt, Sir J.
Grove, T. F.	Royston, Viscount
Guinness, Sir B. L.	Russell, Sir C.
Gwyn, H.	St. Aubyn, J.
Hamilton, rt. hon. Lord C.	Samuda, J. D'A.
Hamilton, E. W. T.	Scholefield, W.
Hanmer, Sir J.	Schreiber, C.
Hardy, rt. hon. G.	Sclater-Booth, G.
Hartley, J.	Scott, Sir W.
Hartopp, E. B.	Seely, C.
Hayter, Captain A. D.	Selwyn, C. J.
Headlam, rt. hon. T. E.	Severne, J. E.
Heathcote, Sir W.	Seymour, G. H.
Heneage, E.	Simonds, W. B.
Henley, rt. hon. J. W.	Smith, A.

Henley, Lord	Smollett, P. B
Herbert, hn. Colonel P.	Stanley, Lord
Hildyard, T. B. T.	Stanley, hon. F.
Hope, A. J. B. B.	Stanley, hon. W. O.
Howard, hon. C. W. G.	Stronge, Sir J. M.
Howes, E.	Stucley, Sir G. S.
Huddleston, J. W.	Taylor, Colonel
Hunt, G. W.	Tollemache, J.
Ingham, R.	Trevor, Lord A. E. Hill-
Jervis, Major	Turner, C.
Jones, D.	Vandeleur, Colonel
Karslake, Sir J. B.	Vanderbyl, P.
Kekewich, S. T.	Vernon, H. F.
Kelk, J.	Vivian, H. H.
Kendall, N.	Walker, Major G. G.
King, J. K.	Walrond, J. W.
King, J. G.	Walsh, A.
Knatchbull-Hugessen, E	Waterhouse, S.
Leader, N. P.	Whalley, G. H.
Lechmere, Sir E. A. H.	Whitmore, H.
Leeman, G.	Williamson, Sir H.
Lewis, H.	Wilmington, Sir T. E.
Lindsay, hon. Col. C.	Wise, H. C.
Locke, J.	Woods, H.
Lopes, Sir M.	Wyndham, hon. H.
M'Lagan, P.	
Merry, J.	TELLERS.
Miller, W.	Laing, S.
Mitchell, T. A.	Karslake, E. K.

NOES.

Allen, W. S.

Lusk, A.

Amberley, Viscount	M'Kenna, J. N.
Baines, E.	M'Laren, D.
Barnes, T.	Maguire, J. F.
Barrow, W. H.	Moore, C.
Bass, M. T.	Morgan, hon. Major
Bazley, T.	Morrison, W.
Beach, W. W. B.	O'Beirne, J. L.
Biddulph, M.	O'Donoghue, The
Blake, J. A.	Oliphant, L.
Bowyer, Sir G.	Onslow, G.
Bright, J.	Padmore, R.
Cowen, J.	Parry, T.
DalGLISH, R.	Peel, J.
Denman, hon. G.	Peto, Sir S. M.
Eykyn, R.	Platt, J.
Fawcett, H.	Pollard-Urquhart, W.
Goldsmid, Sir F. H.	Power, Sir J.
Gorst, J. E.	Pritchard, J.
Grant, A.	Rearden, D. J.
Gridley, Captain H. G.	Robartes, T. J. A.
Hadfield, G.	Robertson, D.
Harvey, R. B.	Stansfeld, J.
Hay, Lord J.	Stock, O.
Hay, Lord W. M.	Talbot, C. R. M.
Henderson, J.	Taylor, P. A.
Hibbert, J. T.	Watkin, E. W.
Hodgkinson, G.	Whatman, J.
Holden, I.	White, J.
Hughes, T.	Whitworth, B.
Hurst, R. H.	Wyld, J.
Jackson, W.	Wyndham, hon. P.
Jervoise, Sir J. C.	Yorke, J. R.

King, hon. P. J. L.	Young, R.
Labouchere, H.	
Langton, W. G.	TELLERS.
Leatham, W. H.	Mill, J. S.
Lefevre, G. J. S.	Gurney, rt. hon. R.
Liddell, hon. H. G.	

Married Womens Property Bill.

[Bill 89] Second reading.

HC Deb 10 June 1868 vol 192 cc1352-78

MR. J. STUART MILL

Perhaps, Sir, those who, like myself, support the extension of political rights to women, should desire the rejection of this Bill, because it is quite certain that its rejection would give an extraordinary impulse to the movement for giving the suffrage to women which has already advanced with so much vigour. But I confess that I should like my own sex to have the credit of giving up unjust and impolitic privileges before they are brought under the influence of other motives than their own good feelings. The debate has produced several most gratifying expressions of feeling, more especially the able and persuasive speech of the hon. Member for Manchester (Mr. Jacob Bright) and the logical and high-principled address of the right hon. Member for Calne (Mr. Lowe). The hon. and learned Member for Colchester (Mr. Karslake) said with great truth that the real authors of the Bill are not present, and he seemed to think they must be persons in whose eyes any change in existing institutions must be an improvement. I am Sorry the hon. Gentleman

has left the House, as I could have informed him who some of those persons are. I do not suppose the hon. Gentleman was aware that among the persons whom he was condemning were those eminent socialists and revolutionists the noble Lord the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for War; the noble Lord having been, along with that distinguished Judge, Sir Lawrence Peel, a member of the committee of the Social Science Association by whom the Bill was drawn up which was introduced into the House by Sir Erskine Perry; and the right hon. Gentleman having taken the chair at a public meeting held in support of its principles. The hon. Gentleman is aware that the right hon. Recorder of London (Mr. Russell Gurney) is a supporter of the Bill, because his name is on the back of it; but he seems to think that Gentleman's absence intentional, though, as a lawyer, it is strange he should not have known that the Recorder's absence is caused by his presiding in his Court.

That conscientious and feeling Judge was very desirous of being present, and would, from his judicial experience, have put the House in possession of the real effects of the present law, and afforded to the Attorney General and the hon. Member for Colchester some information as to the true working of that power in the Divorce Act to which allusion has been made. It is only in cases of desertion that this power comes into exercise, and that the magistrate has power to make orders of protection; but cases are continually happening, some within my own knowledge, in which the husband just avoids the amount of desertion which would enable the magistrate to give protection to the wife. He stays away for a sufficient time to enable her to accumulate a small sum, and then lives with her just long enough to squander it.

As, however, the Attorney General has expressed a willingness to extend and improve the operation of that Act, I trust that he will

himself introduce a Bill on the subject. There has been, indeed, on the part of the Legislature a wonderful overlooking of the need of some such protection. Even in cases where the words "to her separate use" introduced by the Court of Chancery for the wife's protection, have been employed, the sole effect of the words is that the trustees cannot pay the income of the settled property except upon the wife's receipt. That is a perfect protection if the wife is living away from her husband; but if she is living with him, the money immediately becomes the husband's income, and he has a right to take it from her the moment she receives it.

A large portion of the inhabitants of this country are now in the anomalous position of having imposed on them, without their having done anything to deserve it, what we inflict as a penalty on the worst criminals. Like felons they are incapable of holding property. And the class of women who are in that position are married women, whom we profess a desire to surround with marks of honour and dignity. It seems to be the opinion of those who oppose the measure that it is impossible for society to exist on a harmonious footing between two persons unless one of them has absolute power over the other. This may have been the case in savage times, but we are advanced beyond the savage state; and I believe it is not found that civilized men or women cannot live with their brothers or with their sisters except on such terms, or that business cannot be successfully carried on unless one partner has the absolute mastery over the other.

The family offers a type and a school of the relation of superiors and inferiors, exemplified in parents and children; it should also offer a type and a school of the relation of equality, exemplified in husband and wife. I am not insensible to the evils which husbands suffer from bad and unprincipled wives. Happily the sufferings of slavery extend to the slave master as well as to the slave. But if you want to give the

wife the strongest possible motive to strain to the utmost her claims against the property of her husband, what step more effectual for this object could be taken than to enact that she should have no rights of her own, and should be entirely dependent upon what she can extract from the husband?

It is only by doing justice to people that we can hope to prevent their encroaching on the rights of others. Would the hon. Member for Colchester accept for himself exclusion from all rights of property, on condition that some one else should pay his debts, and make atonement for his wrongs?

The Attorney General certainly hit the weakest part of the Bill when he pointed out that, if the rights of husband and wife were to be equal, their obligations ought also to be equal. If the Bill gets into Committee it will be necessary to alter some of the clauses so as to establish an obligation equally on both parties. The Bill will no doubt require a great deal of consideration, not so much in regard to the omission of any of the clauses as to the addition of others. It is very true that if the Bill passes, many other alterations of the law will be necessary; for when the law is founded on a bad principle much re-adjustment is necessitated by the adoption of a good one. But if it should please the House to refer the Bill to a Select Committee, there are hon. and learned Gentlemen on both sides of the House quite capable of proposing such alterations as will make the Bill work smoothly.

For greater enfranchisement of the working classes.

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HC Deb 13 April 1866 vol 182 cc1227-321 1227

§ Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Amendment proposed to Question [12th April], "That the Bill be now read a second time;" and which Amendment was:

To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "this House, while ready to consider, with a view to its settlement, the question of Parliamentary Reform, is of opinion that it is inexpedient to discuss a Bill for the reduction of the Franchise in England and Wales, until the House has before it the entire scheme contemplated by the Government, for the amendment of the Representation of the People," (Earl Grosvenor,) instead thereof.

§ Question again proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

§ Debate resumed...

J. STUART MILL

Although the question which will be put from the Chair relates ostensibly to the mere order of proceeding, it will hardly be denied, and least of all after the speech of the right hon. Baronet, that the question we are really discussing is, whether the Bill ought to pass. Indeed, the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn is the only

speaker on the Opposition side who has argued the nominal issue as if he thought that it was the real one, or has even laid any great stress upon it. That noble Lord, in a speech marked by all the fairness and candour which were known to be his characteristics, and by even more than the ability - at least, by more varied and sustained ability - has said, I think, the very most and the very best that can be said in favour of the Amendment, considered as a substantive Motion.

He has brought forward considerations well calculated to make an impression, but only on one part of his audience - on those who, though they may be willing to consent to some Reform, look with extreme jealousy on the most important part of it, the enfranchisement of a portion of the working classes - who regard this less as a good to be desired, than as a doubtful, perhaps a dangerous, experiment, and, tremble lest they should eventually find themselves committed to giving those classes a trifle more representation than they were duly warned of beforehand.

What is the very worst extremity of evil with which the noble Lord threatens the House in case it should be so unguarded as to pass this Bill without the other measures of Parliamentary Reform by which it is to be succeeded?

Why, it is this: that if something happens which it requires the most improbable concurrence of chances to bring about, something against which neither the personal honour of the Government, nor the inexorable dates fixed by the Registration Acts, nor even the expressed will of Parliament, if Parliament should think fit to express its will, can guarantee us; in this all but impossible case there may happen - what? That the redistribution of seats may, in spite of all that can be done, possibly devolve upon a House of Commons elected under the enlarged franchise.

Now, I put it to the noble Lord's clear intellect - and impartial because clear - is this an argument which can have any weight with anybody who thinks the enlarged franchise an improvement - who thinks it calculated to give us a better Legislature? If the Legislature it gives us is a better one for all other purposes, will it not be a better one for this purpose? If it can be trusted to govern us, if it can be trusted to tax us, if it can be trusted to legislate for us, can it not be trusted to revise its own Constitution? Does experience teach us to expect that this of all things is a work in which legislative bodies in general, and British Parliaments in particular, are likely to be rash, headstrong, precipitate, subversive, revolutionary?

I think, Sir, that a Parliament which was cautious in nothing else might be depended on for caution in meddling with the conditions of its own power. Sir, this formidable one chance in a thousand with which the noble Lord threatens us, is only terrific to those in whose eyes the Bill is a rash and portentous transfer of power to the working classes. To those who think that the enfranchising provisions are good in themselves, even if there were no redistribution of seats, and still better if there is, this phantom of evil has no terrors.

And that I believe to be the opinion of the great body of Reformers, both in and out of the House. We are, I dare say, as sincerely desirous as the noble Mover of the Amendment, that family and pocket boroughs should be extinguished, and the inordinate political influence of a few noble and opulent families abridged. We are, I believe, as anxious to curtail the power which wealth possesses, of buying its way into the House of Commons, and shutting the door upon other people, as the wealthiest gentleman present. But though we are quite orthodox on these great points of Conservative Parliamentary Reform - and look forward with delight to our expected co-operation with gentlemen on the opposite benches in the congenial occupation of converting them from theories into facts - we

yet think that a measure of enfranchisement like this Bill - moderate, indeed, far more moderate than is desired by the majority of Reformers, but which does make the working classes a substantial power in this House - is not only a valuable part of a scheme of Parliamentary Reform, but highly valuable even if nothing else were to follow.

And as this is the only question among those raised on the present occasion which seems to me in the smallest degree worth discussing, I shall make no further apology for confining myself to it.

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Sir, measures may be recommended either by their principle, or by their practical consequences; and if they have either of these recommendations, they usually have both. As far as regards the principle of this measure, there is but little to disagree about; for a measure which goes no farther than this, does not raise any of the questions of principle on which the House is divided; and I cannot but think that the right hon. Baronet, in introducing those questions, has caused the debate to deviate somewhat from its proper course.

If it were necessary to take into consideration even all the reasonable things which can be said pro and con about democracy, the House would have a very different task before it. But this is not a democratic measure. It neither deserves that praise, nor, if hon. Members will have it so, that reproach. It is not a corollary from what may be called the numerical theory of representation. It is required by the class theory, which we all know is the Conservative view of the Constitution - the favourite doctrine, not only of what are called Conservative Reformers, but of Conservative non-Reformers as well. The opponents of Reform are accustomed to say that the Constitution knows nothing of individuals, but only of classes. Individuals, they tell us, cannot complain of not being represented,

so long as the class they belong to is represented. But if any class is unrepresented, or has not its proper share of representation relatively to others, that is a grievance.

Now, all that need be asked at present is that this theory be applied to practice. There is a class which has not yet had the benefit of the theory. While so many classes, comparatively insignificant in numbers, and not supposed to be freer from class partialities or interests than their neighbours, are represented, some of them, I venture to say, greatly over-represented in this House, there is a class, more numerous than all the others, and therefore, as a mere matter of human feeling, entitled to more consideration - weak as yet, and therefore needing representation the more, but daily becoming stronger, and more capable of making its claims good - and this class is not represented. We claim, then, a large and liberal representation of the working classes, on the Conservative theory of the Constitution. We demand that they be represented as a class, if represented they cannot be as human beings; and we call on hon. Gentlemen to prove the sincerity of their convictions by extending the benefit of them to the great majority of their countrymen.

But hon. Gentlemen say, the working classes are already represented. It has just come to light, to the astonishment of everybody, that these classes actually form 26 per cent of the borough constituencies. They kept the secret so well - it required so much research to detect their presence on the register, their votes were so devoid of any traceable consequences; they had all this power of shaking the foundations of our institutions, and so obstinately persisted in not doing it - that hon. Gentlemen are quite alarmed, and recoil in terror from the abyss into which they have not fallen.

Well, Sir, it certainly seems that this amount of enfranchisement of the working classes has done no harm. But if it has not done harm, perhaps it has not done much good either; at least, not the kind of good which we are talking about. A class may have a great number of votes in every constituency in the kingdom, and not obtain a single representative in this House. Their right of voting may be only the right of being everywhere outvoted. If, indeed, the mechanism of our electoral system admitted representation of minorities; if those who are outvoted in one place could join their votes with those who are outvoted in another; then, indeed, a fourth part, even if only of the borough electors, would be a substantial power, for it would mean a fourth of the borough representatives. 26 per cent concentrated would be a considerable representation; but 26 per cent diffused may be almost the same as none at all.

The right hon. Baronet has said that a class, though but a minority, may, by cleverly managing its votes, be master of the situation, and that the tenant-farmers in Hertfordshire can carry an election. They may be able to decide whether a Tory or a Whig shall be elected; they may be masters of so small a situation as that. But what you are afraid of is, lest they should carry points on which their interest as a class is opposed to that of all other classes, on which if they were only a third of the constituency, the other two-thirds would be against them.

Do you think they would be masters of such a situation as that?

Sir, there is no known contrivance by which in the long run a minority can outnumber a majority; by which one-third of the electors can outvote the other two-thirds. The real share of the working classes in the representation is measured by the number of Members they can return - in other words, the number of constituencies in which they are the majority: and even that only marks the extreme limit of the

influence which they can exercise, but by no means that which they will.

Why, Sir, among the recent discoveries, one is, that there are some half-dozen constituencies in which working men are even now a majority; and I put it to hon. Gentlemen, would anybody ever have suspected it? At the head of these constituencies is Coventry. Are the Members for Coventry generally great sticklers for working-class notions? It has, I believe, been observed that these Gentlemen usually vote quite correctly on the subject of French ribbons; and as that kind of virtue comes most natural to Conservatives, the Members for Coventry often are Conservative.

But probably that would happen much the same if the master manufacturers had all the votes. If, indeed, a tax on power-looms were proposed, and the Members for Coventry voted for it, that might be some indication of working class influences; though I believe that the working men, even at Coventry, have far outgrown that kind of absurdities. Even if the franchise were so much enlarged that the working men, by polling their whole strength, could return by small majorities 200 of the 658 Members of this House, there would not be fifty of that number who would represent the distinctive feelings and opinions of working men, or would be, in any class sense, their representatives.

And what if they had the whole 200? Even then, on any subject in which they were concerned as a class, there would be more than two to one against them when they were in the wrong. They could not succeed in anything, even when unanimous, unless they carried with them nearly a third of the representatives of the other classes; and if they did that, there would be, I think, a very strong presumption of their being in the right.

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As a matter of principle, then, and not only on liberal principles, but on those of the Conservative party, the case in favour of the Bill seems irresistible. But it is asked by my right hon. Friend the Member for Calne, what practical good do we expect? What particular measures do we hope to see carried in a reformed House which cannot be carried in the present? If I understand my right hon. Friend correctly, he thinks we ought to come to the House with a Bill of indictment against itself - an inventory of wrong things which the House does, and right things which it cannot be induced to do - and when, convinced by our arguments, the House pleads guilty, and cries "Peccavi," we have his permission to bring in a Reform Bill.

Sir, my right hon. Friend says we should not proceed on a priori reasoning, but should be practical. I want to know whether this is his idea of being practical. For my part, I am only sorry it is not possible that in the discussion of this question special applications should be kept entirely out of view: for if we descend to particulars, and point out this and that in the conduct of the House which we should like to see altered, but which the House, by the very fact that it does not alter them, does not think require alteration, how can we expect the House to take this as a proof that its Constitution needs Reform?

We should not at all advance our cause, while we should stir up all the most irritating topics in the domain of politics. Suppose, now - and I purposely choose a small instance to give the less offence - suppose we were to say that if the working classes had been represented it would not have been found so easy for hon. Gentlemen whose cattle were slaughtered by Act of Parliament, to get compensated twice over: once by a rate, and again by a rise of price. I use the case only for illustration; I lay no stress on it; but I ask, ought the debate on a Reform Bill to consist of a series of discussions on points similar to this, and a hundred times more irritating than this? Is it desirable to drag into this discussion all the

points in which any one may think that the rights or interests of labour are not sufficiently regarded by the House?

I will ask another question. If the authors of the Reform Bill of 1832 had foretold (which they scarcely could have done, since they did not themselves know it), if they had predicted that through it we should abolish the Corn Laws; that we should abolish the Navigation Laws; that we should grant free trade to all foreigners without reciprocity; that we should reduce inland postage to a penny; that we should renounce the exercise of any authority over our colonies - all which things have really happened - does the House think that these announcements would have greatly inclined the Parliament of that day towards passing the Bill?

Whether the practical improvements that will follow a further Parliamentary Reform will be equal to these, the future must disclose; but whatever they may be, it is already certain that they are not at the present time regarded as improvements by the House, for if the House thought so, there is nothing to hinder it from adopting them.

Sir, there is a better way of persuading possessors of power to give up a part of it; not by telling them that they make a bad use of their power - which, if it were true, they could not be expected to be aware of - but by reminding them of what they are aware of: their own fallibility.

Sir, we all of us know that we hold many erroneous opinions, but we do not know which of our opinions these are, for if we did they would not be our opinions. Therefore, reflecting men take precautions beforehand against their own errors, without waiting till they and all other people are agreed about the particular instances; and if there are things which, from their mental habits or their position in life, are in danger of escaping their notice, they are glad to associate themselves with others of different habits and positions, which very

fact peculiarly qualifies them to see the precise things which they themselves do not see.

Believing the House to be composed of reasonable men, this is what we ask them to do.

Every class knows some things not so well known to other people, and every class, has interests which are more or less special to itself, and for which no protection is so effectual as its own. These may be *à priori* doctrines - but so is the doctrine that a straight line is the shortest distance between two points; they are as much truths of common sense and common observation as that is, and persons of common sense act upon them with the same perfect confidence. I claim the benefit of these principles for the working classes. They require it more than any other class.

The class of lawyers, or the class of merchants, is amply represented, though there are no constituencies in which lawyers or merchants form the majority. But a successful lawyer or merchant easily gets into Parliament by his wealth or social position, and once there, is as good a representative of lawyers or merchants as if he had been elected on purpose; but no constituency elects a working man, or a man who looks at questions with working men's eyes. Is there, I wonder, a single Member of this House who thoroughly knows the working men's view of trades unions, or of strikes, and could bring it before the House in a manner satisfactory to working men? My hon. Friend the Member for Brighton, if any one; perhaps not even he.

Are there many of us who so perfectly understand the subject of apprenticeships, let us say, or of the hours of labour, as to have nothing to learn on the subject from intelligent operatives? I grant that, along with many just ideas and much valuable knowledge, you would sometimes find pressed upon you erroneous opinions,

mistaken views of what is for the interest of labour; and I am not prepared to say that if the labouring classes were predominant in the House, attempts might not be made to carry some of these wrong notions into practice.

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But there is no question at present about making the working classes predominant. What is asked is a sufficient representation to ensure that their opinions are fairly placed before the House, and are met by real arguments, addressed to their own reason, by people who can enter into their way of looking at the subjects in which they are concerned. In general, those who attempt to correct the errors of the working classes do it as if they were talking to babies. They think any trivialities sufficient; if they condescend to argue, it is from premises which hardly any working man would admit; they expect that the things which appear self-evident to them will appear self-evident to the working classes: their arguments never reach the mark, never come near what a working man has in his mind, because they do not know what is in his mind. Consequently, when the questions which are near the hearts of the working men are talked about in this House, there is no want of good will to them, that I cheerfully admit; but everything which is most necessary to prove to them is taken for granted.

Do not suppose that working men would always be unconvincible by such arguments as ought to satisfy them. It is not one of the faults of democracy to be obstinate in error. An Englishman who had lived some years in the United States lately summed up his opinion of the Americans by saying, "they are the most teachable people on the face of the earth," Old countries are not as teachable as young countries, but I believe it will be found that the educated artisans, those especially who take interest in politics, are the most teachable

of all our classes. They have much to make them so; they are, as a rule, more in earnest than any other class; their opinions are more genuine, less influenced by what so greatly influences some of the other classes. The desire of getting on, and their social position is not such as to breed self conceit. Above all, there is one thing to which, I believe, almost every one will testify who has had much to do with them, and of which even my own limited experience supplies striking examples, there is no class which so well bears to be told of its faults; to be told of them even in harsh terms, if they believe that the person so speaking to them says what he thinks, and has no ends of his own to serve by saying it.

I can hardly conceive a nobler course of national education than the debates of this House would become, if the notions, right and wrong, which are fermenting in the minds of the working classes, many of which go down very deep into the foundations of society and government, were fairly stated and genuinely discussed within these walls. It has often been noticed how readily in a free country people resign themselves even to the refusal of what they ask, when everything which they could have said for themselves has been said by somebody in the course of the discussion.

The working classes have never yet had this tranquillising assurance. They have always felt that not they themselves, perhaps, but their opinions, were prejudged; were condemned without being listened to. But let them have the same equal opportunities which others have of pleading their own cause; let them feel that the contest is one of reason and not of power. and if they do not obtain what they desire, they will as readily acquiesce in defeat, or trust to the mere progress of reason for reversing the verdict, as any other portion of the community. And they will, much often than at present, obtain what they desire.

Let me refer hon. Gentlemen to Tocqueville, who is so continually quoted when he says anything uncomplimentary to democracy, that those who have not read him might mistake him for an enemy of it, instead of its discriminating but sincere friend, Tocqueville says that, though the various American Legislatures are perpetually making mistakes, they are perpetually correcting them too; and that the evil, such as it is, is far outweighed by the salutary effects of the general tendency of their legislation, which is maintained, in a degree unknown elsewhere, in the direction of the interest of the people. Not that vague abstraction, the good of the country, but the actual, positive well-being of the living human creatures who compose the population.

But we are told that our own legislation has made great progress in this direction; that the House has repealed the Corn Laws, removed religious disabilities, and got rid of I know not how many more abominations.

Sir, it has; and I am far from disparaging these great reforms, which have probably saved the country from a violent convulsion. As little would I undervalue the good sense and good feeling which have made the governing classes of this country capable of thus far advancing with the times. But they have their recompense: habes pretium, cruet noa figeris. Their reward is that they are not hated, as other privileged classes have been. And that is the fitting reward for ceasing to do harm; for merely repealing bad laws which Parliament itself had made.

But is this all that the Legislature of a country like ours can offer to its people? Is there nothing for us to do, but only to undo the mischief that we or our predecessors have done? Are there not all the miseries of an old and crowded society waiting to be dealt with? the curse of ignorance, the curse of pauperism, the curse of disease, the curse of a whole population born and nurtured in crime? All these

things we are just beginning to look at; just touching with the tips of our fingers: and by the time two or three more generations are dead and gone, we may perhaps have discovered how to keep them alive, and how to make their lives worth having.

I must needs think that we should get on much faster with all this, the most important part of the business of Government in our days, if those who are the chief sufferers by the great chronic evils of our civilization had representatives among us to stimulate our zeal, as well as to inform us by their experience. Of all great public objects, the one which would be most forwarded by the presence of working people's representatives in this House is the one in which we flatter ourselves we have done most: popular education.

And let me here offer to my right hon. Friend the Member for Calne, who demands practical arguments, a practical argument which I think ought to come home to him.

If those whose children we vote money to instruct had been properly represented in this House, he would not have lost office on the Revised Code. The working classes would have seen in him an administrator of a public fund, honestly determined that the work for which the public paid should be good, honest work. They are not the people to prefer a greater quantity of sham teaching to a smaller quantity of real teaching at a less expense. Real education is the thing they want, and as it is what he wanted, they would have understood him and upheld him.

I have myself seen these services remembered to his honour, even at this moment of exasperation, by one of the leaders of the working classes. And, unless I am mistaken - it is not my opinion alone - very few years of a real working class representation would have passed over our heads before there would be in every parish a school rate, and the school doors freely open to all the world; and in one generation from that time England would be an educated nation.

Will it ever become so by your present plan, which gives to him that hath, and only to him that hath? Never.

If there were no reason for extending the franchise to the working classes except the stimulus it would give to this one alone of the Imperial works which the present state of society urgently demands from Parliament, the reason would be more than sufficient. These, Sir, are a few of the benefits which I expect from a further Parliamentary Reform; and as they depend altogether upon one feature of it, the effective representation of the working classes, their whole weight is in favour of passing the present Bill, without regard to any Bills that may follow. I look upon a liberal enfranchisement of the working classes as incomparably the greatest improvement in our representative institutions which we at present have it in our power to make; and as I should be glad to receive this greatest improvement along with others, so I am perfectly willing to accept it by itself.

Such others as we need, we shall, no doubt, end by obtaining, and a person must be very simple who imagines that we should have obtained them a day sooner if Ministers had incumbered the subject by binding up any of them with the present Bill.

MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS (METROPOLIS) BILL. — LEAVE. — FIRST READING.

HC Deb 21 May 1867 vol 187 cc882-91

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Mr John Stuart Mill, in moving for leave to bring in a Bill for the establishment of Municipal Corporations in the several districts of the Metropolis, said, he did not do so in any spirit of hostility to the Report of the Committee relative to the Local Government of the Metropolis, of which Committee he had the honour of being a Member. It was true he had disagreed from the majority of the Committee on several of their Resolutions, but as a whole their Report had his general concurrence, and he considered it a great step in the progress of this question. The Committee, in the first place, freely acknowledged existing defects; and, in the second place, it recognised the general principles upon which, in his opinion, a reform of those defects should proceed. It recognised that good municipal institutions for the metropolis must consist of two parts — namely, local bodies representing districts, and a general body representing the metropolis at large — the latter to take the place of the present Board of Works. Neither was his Motion framed in hostility to the Board of Works. It might at least be said for the Board that it had been appointed to perform a great and laborious work, and that it had actually done that work. The Report proposed increased powers and an improved mode of election for the general Board; and with regard to the local district bodies, the Report considered the present districts to be too small, and virtually recommended the abolition of hole-and-corner local government. The Report might be considered in that and other respects as an

outline of what municipal reformers desired; and the Bill he proposed to introduce would do something towards filling up that outline with regard to the local bodies only.

He had given notice of his intention to ask for leave to bring in a Bill for the establishment of a central federal municipality for the whole of the metropolis, but he was not yet prepared with that Bill, and he should not ask the House to read the present Bill a second time until he was able to lay before them the entire plan. The plan he was now about to propose was not his own, but originated with one of the most important vestries in Westminster, and it had obtained the warm support of many of the leading vestrymen of the metropolis. He had no hostility to the vestries. Our parochial institutions, with all their defects, had done great things for the country. They had carried down to comparatively low grades of society a familiar acquaintance with the forms of public business and the modes of carrying it on, and in consequence this country possessed an advantage which, perhaps, no other country (except the United States) enjoyed — namely, that when circumstance call for the expression of an opinion by a collective body of citizens, there are numerous persons who know how that opinion should be collected and expressed. These merits could not be denied to our local system; but that system, as established in the metropolis, appeared to him to be on too small a scale. The Report of the Committee did not recognise that fact to so great an extent as he could have wished, and therefore he ventured to propose his plan. The Committee said that the districts of the metropolis were too small and inconvenient in some cases. He (Mr. Stuart Mill) believed they were too small in all cases, and that the municipal boroughs of the metropolis ought to be conterminous with the Parliamentary boroughs. He thought it necessary that the municipal districts should be of considerable extent, and highly desirable that they should also be units in themselves. Unless the

districts were considerable they were always more or less a kind of hole-and-corner government.

It was a common fallacy, now going the round of Europe, but still a fallacy, that the mere circumstance of a body being popularly chosen was a guarantee that it would conduct its proceedings on popular principles. His faith in popular governments did not depend on their being popularly elected. The real value of popular institutions consisted in the popular power of correcting mistakes, and enforcing responsibility to the people. Owing to this responsibility, it would not be possible for any body long to retain its position if it habitually exercised its powers contrary to the public interest as generally understood. Another point was that the greatest attainable publicity should be secured to the business transacted by these bodies; but when the business was on a very small scale it did not excite much attention. The check was not effectual unless the business was of such a nature that the public eye would be fixed on it. It was further desirable, for the sake of greater publicity, that not only should the district be of considerable magnitude and the business important, but that the districts should, if possible, be natural units in themselves, or at least, should be units for other purposes than this special one. The importance of this was, that it would tend to induce a higher class of men to enter these bodies. Three of the metropolitan boroughs (the City, Westminster, and Southwark) were, if not natural, at least historical units; the other districts, though of more recent origin, were gradually acquiring an esprit de corps, and a sense of common interest. It had been at first thought desirable that an additional district should be created out of parts of Marylebone and Finsbury. The great importance, however, of making the municipal and Parliamentary boundaries coincide, had led to the abandonment of this idea, except so far as regarded the formation of a new police district, there being at present no police-office between Marlborough Street and Worship Street in the extreme east. The Bill provided for

the division of the Tower Hamlets; but this would be dealt with by the Bill for the Representation of the People. He should not ask the House to read the Bill a second time till he had introduced the remainder of the plan of which it formed a part. Whatever merit the plan had, and that merit appeared to him to be considerable, it belonged entirely to his constituents who originated the plan. He himself had no part in it except that, at his own special request, he was permitted to introduce it to the House. He now begged to move for leave to bring in a Bill to establish Municipal Corporations within the Metropolis.

§ Bill for the establishment of Municipal Corporations within the Metropolis, ordered to be brought in by Mr. MILL, Mr. THOMAS HUGHES, and Mr. TOMLINE.

§ Bill presented, and read the first time. [Bill 166.]

MEETINGS IN ROYAL PARKS BILL.

[BILL 134.] SECOND READING.

HC Deb 22 July 1867 vol 188 cc1878-96

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MR. J. STUART MILL

said, among the many, to me, regretable things which were said by my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Oxford (Mr. Neate), there was one with which I entirely agree: that this question is entirely a political question. It is only as a political question that I care about it. I see no reason why we should at present discuss all the purposes for which the Parks should or should not be allowed to be used. All I am anxious about is that political meetings should be allowed to be held there. And why do I desire this? Because it has been for centuries the pride of this country, and one of its most valued distinctions from the despotically-governed countries of the Continent, that a man has a right to speak his mind, on politics or on any other subject, to those who would listen to him, when and where he will. He has not a right to force himself upon anyone; he has not a right to intrude upon private property; but wheresoever he has a right to be, there, according to the Constitution of this country, he has a right to talk politics, to one, to fifty, or to 50,000 persons. I stand up for the right of doing this in the Parks.

I am not going to discuss this matter as an affair of technical law. We are not here as lawyers, but as legislators. We are not now considering what is the interpretation of the existing law; we are

considering what the law ought to be. We are told that the Parks belong to the Crown, but the Crown means Her Majesty's Government. Her Majesty's Government of course have power over the Parks; they have power over all thoroughfares, all public places, but they have it for purposes strictly denned. It is not, I believe, even pretended that the Parks are the property of the Sovereign in the same manner as Balmoral and Osborne are her property. They are part of the hereditary property of the Crown, which the Sovereign at her accession gave up to the nation in exchange for the Civil List; and the right hon. Gentleman would find some difficulty in showing that the surrender was accompanied with any condition as to the particular uses to which the Parks should be applied — any stipulation confining their use to walking and riding, or, as it is called, recreation. As long as the compact with Her Majesty exists, so long, I contend, the Parks are public property, to be managed for public uses at the public expense, and to be applied to all uses conducive to the public interest. If a technical right of exclusion has been allowed to be kept up, it is for police purposes — for the safety of the public property and the maintenance of the public peace — and not for the restriction of the freedom of public speaking.

On what principle is the House asked to curtail this inherited freedom of speech, and make it penal for the people to use that freedom in large numbers, in the only places now left in the metropolis where large numbers can conveniently be assembled? On no principle can this be done, except that of the most repressive acts of the Governments most jealous of public freedom. The French Emperor says that twenty-one people shall not meet and talk politics in a drawing-room without his license. Her Majesty's Government only says that 100,000 people shall not meet for a similar purpose in the Parks without theirs. This is a wide difference in degree. It is much better to have our lips sealed in the Parks than in our own houses—better that free speech should be limited to a few thousands or

hundreds than to tens; but the principle is the same, and if once it is admitted, a violation has commenced of the traditional liberties of the country, and the extent to which such violation may afterwards be carried becomes a mere question of detail.

But what is the justification alleged for introducing arbitrary restrictions by which the holding of a great open-air meeting in London without the previous consent of the Government will be made impossible? The excuses which profess to be founded on public convenience do not deserve an answer, even if they had not been already answered a hundred times; the fact is, no one believes them to be serious. There is no decent argument for the interdiction of political meetings in the Park, which does not proceed on the assumption that political meetings are not a legitimate purpose to apply a public place to, and that it is, on the whole, a desirable thing to discourage them. I wish hon. Gentlemen to be aware what it is they are asked to vote for; what doctrine respecting the constitutional liberties of this country they will give their adhesion to if they support the Bill. The opinion they will pledge themselves to is something like this — unfortunately the people of this country are so foolish that they will have the right of holding large political meetings, and it is impossible to take it from them by law; but that right, though necessary, is a necessary evil, and it is a point gained to render its exercise more rare by throwing impediments in its way. If hon. Gentlemen opposite would be candid, I am persuaded they would confess that this is a fair statement of what is really in their minds. It is proved by the arguments they use. They say that these multitudinous meetings are not held for the purpose of discussion, but for intimidation.

Sir, I believe public meetings, multitudinous or not, seldom are intended for discussion. That is not their function. They are a public manifestation of the strength of those who are of a certain opinion. It

is easy to give this a bad name; but it is one of the recognized springs of our Constitution. Let us not be intimidated by the word "intimidation." Will any one say that the numbers and enthusiasm of those who join in asking anything from Parliament, are not one of the elements which a Statesman ought to have before him, and which a wise Statesman will take into consideration in deciding whether to grant or to refuse the request? We are told that threatening language is used at these meetings. In a time of excitement there are always persons who use threatening language. But we can bear a great deal of that sort of thing, without being the worse for it, in a country which has inherited from its ancestors the right of political demonstration. It cannot be borne quite so well by countries which do not possess this right. Then, the discontent, which cannot exhale itself in public meetings, bursts forth in insurrections, which, whether successful or repressed, always leave behind them a long train of calamitous consequences.

But it is said that it is not meant to put down these public meetings, or to prevent them from being held. No; but you mean to render them more difficult; you mean to impose conditions on them, other than that of keeping the public peace. Now, any condition whatever imposed on political meetings, over and above those by which every transaction of any of Her Majesty's subjects is necessarily bound — and any restriction of place or time imposed on political speech, which is not imposed on other speech — involves the same vicious and unconstitutional principle.

Sir, I contend that all open spaces belonging to the public, in which large numbers can congregate without doing mischief, should be freely open for the purpose of public meetings, subject to the precautions necessary for the preservation of the peace. A great meeting cannot possibly be called together in London without the Government knowing of it before-hand, and having ample warning to

have a sufficient force of police at hand to meet any exigency, however improbable. I must therefore oppose this Bill to the utmost.

{Editor note: Opportunity was taken, by opponents including Mill, to talk out this Bill before it could become law. Filibustering and not philosophy was responsible for its demise.)

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Expenses and corrupt practises.

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PARLIAMENTARY REFORM — REPRESENTATION OF THE
PEOPLE BILL — [BILL 79.]

COMMITTEE. [PROGRESS MAY 6.]

HC Deb 09 May 1867 vol 187 cc266-361

MR. J. STUART MILL

It must be admitted that the Government, by the last concession which they have made, have abated one of the most obvious objections to the most objectionable of all the provisions of the Bill. The compound-householders are not to be burdened with any fine. They are to pay it, but they will be allowed to deduct it from their rent, and will thus be subject to one disadvantage the less. So much has been said about this single disadvantage — so great stress has been laid on what is called the fine — that attention has not been sufficiently directed to the many other impediments which will remain. The hon. Member (Mr. Hibbert) has called the Amendment a great improvement. He should rather have called it a real, but a small improvement. Not only will the voter have to keep money by him for a quarterly payment, instead of a weekly payment which gives no trouble, being confounded with his rent; not only will he have to lie out of his money until he has recovered it — perhaps by weekly instalments; but another most essential condition is requisite, on which the hon. Member has justly laid much stress — his landlord must consent. And who is his landlord? One of that powerful class, destined henceforward to be more powerful than ever — not a popular class either with this House or with the public — the owners of small tenements: every one of whom, if his solvent tenants take advantage of the Bill, will lose, to say the least, a profitable contract.

Let hon. Gentlemen realize to themselves what an obstacle this is, and then say whether it is likely that in the face of it, the Bill will give more than a very limited amount of honest enfranchisement. But I might be better inclined to accept it as an instalment, if it did no

worse; if it was satisfied with keeping almost every small householder out, and did not let anybody in by unfair means. But what will happen? If the Bill becomes law in its present shape, no sooner will it have passed than the scramble will begin for the 465,000 compound-householders. It is safe to say that whichever party can put the greatest number of these people on the register, and, what is of still greater consequence, can keep them there, will have a tolerably secure tenure of power for some time to come. Now, success in this will be principally a question of money. We need not necessarily suppose any direct bribery, any payment of rates, anything distinctly illegal. But there will have to be, and there will be, a perpetual organized canvass of the 465,000. Organizations will be formed for hunting up the small householders who are not rated, and inducing them to come on the rate book. The owners of small tenements must be canvassed too, that they may give their tenants leave to register. Every motive that can be brought to bear on either class will be plied to the utmost. Perpetual stimulus will be applied to the political feelings of those who have any, and to the personal interests of all. Both sides in politics will be prompted to this conduct by the strongest possible motive — by that which makes so many men, not wholly dishonourable or without a conscience, connive at bribery — the conviction that the other party will practise it, and that unless they do the same, their side, which is the right, will be at an unfair disadvantage. Now, this annual, or rather perennial, rating and registering campaign among the small householders, will cost much money.

I hope that hon. Gentlemen on this side of the House, who, loving household suffrage not wisely but too well, have brought matters to this state, intend to come down handsomely to the registration societies in their own neighbourhoods; for the registration societies are destined henceforth to be one of the great institutions of the country. I wonder if any one, possessed of the necessary pecuniary

statistics, has estimated how much will be added to the already enormous expenses of our electoral system when this Bill has passed. The Chancellor of the Exchequer knows perfectly well which side is likely to carry off the prize when it comes to a contest of purses; though, after the profound contempt which I was happy to hear that he entertains for all such considerations, it would be uncourteous to suppose that he is in any way influenced by them. But this serviceable piece of knowledge, though the right hon. Gentleman is indifferent to it, is one which I should like to impress upon the clever Gentlemen who are going to outwit the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and make his Bill bring forth pure and simple household suffrage, contrary to the intentions of everybody except themselves who will vote for it. Now, if the Conservatives do, what without doubt the right hon. Gentleman intends they should — namely, by dint of money, bring everybody on the register who is dependent on them, or who they think for any reason is likely to vote with them; what is it expected that the Radicals will do?

Every creature must fight with its own natural weapons: hon. Gentlemen opposite carry theirs in their pockets: the natural weapon of the Radicals is political agitation. In mere self-defence they will be compelled to be greater agitators than ever, more vehement in their appeals to Radical feeling, more strenuous in counter-working the voter's personal interest by exalting to the highest pitch every political passion incident to his position in life. This is what will happen even if we make the chimerical assumption, that the money expended in making voters will all be expended in modes which are conventionally innocent — that there will be nothing scandalous, nothing absolutely illegal; not even that decent form of bribery, payment of rates. But is any one so simple as to believe that this will be the case?

Encouraged by the brilliant success of your bribery laws, you are going to make payment of rates for political purposes an offence against those laws: and your reward will be, that whereas you do now and then detect a case of bribery, it is questionable if there will ever be a single conviction for the other offence. You find it difficult enough to prove bribery, committed where all eyes are watching for it, amidst the heat and publicity of a contested election. Will it be an easy matter, think you, to prove judicially that the non-rated householder, who a month or two before the registration, goes quietly to the parochial officer and pays his full, not his composition rate, has had it put into his hands a few days previous, when no one but the registration agent was thinking about him? And if you could prove it, whom could you convict? Not the candidate; at the time of the registration there is no candidate. The offender is a society of gentlemen in the neighbourhood. If you can convict any one, it will be some needy agent, some man of straw, unauthorized by anybody, beyond general instructions to do the best he can for the Conservative or the Liberal interest.

I just now called what would take place a scramble for the compound-householders. I might have called it an auction. Except under the impulse of strong political excitement, we may expect that the small householders who will get on the register will generally get there at some other person's expense. And the work which begins in this way will not end with it. Once paid for his vote, the integrity of the elector is gone. Many a one will go further, and take payment in a grosser and more shameless form. This is the futurity which the Government Reform Bill provides for us. There was but one thing wanting to complete the picture, and that one thing has been vouchsafed to us. It is, that the Minister who is in this way sowing bribery broadcast with one hand, should hold a Bill for the better prevention of bribery in the other. That Bribery Bill completes the irony of the situation.

Sir, the point on which we are now deliberating is, in the judgment of this side of the House, the most important of all the points which we shall have to decide. I sincerely hope, in spite of what was said by the hon. and learned Gentleman who spoke last, that it is not so in the eyes of the Government. No one now wants to throw out the Bill. If it is wrecked it will be by its authors; nobody can wreck it but themselves. The Bill, however, has now come out in its true colours, as a Bill which restricts the suffrage. Of course, I do not mean that it does nothing else. But if it passes, it will make the franchise more difficult of access to a considerable portion of those who are by the present law entitled to it.

As regards the new electors, the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer has framed his measure very skilfully to effect the greatest apparent, and the smallest real, enfranchisement of independent voters, and the greatest, both apparent and real, enfranchisement of the bribeable and the dependent. Perhaps the Mouse thinks I mean this as a reproach to the right hon. Gentleman, as if there were something tricky and insincere in it. But I am bound to say that the right hon. Gentleman, from as long ago as I remember, has seemed to me remarkably constant to a certain political ideal, which may be defined, an ostensibly large and wide democracy, led and guided by the landed interest. He has always aimed at shaping our institutions after this type, whenever he has meddled with them, either as a theoretical or a practical politician; and there need be no doubt that he sincerely thinks it the best form of Government. But that is no reason why we should follow him, who like neither his end nor his means.

I am afraid that this Bill, so far as it relates to compound-householders, will make ten electors with other people's money, for other people's purposes, for every one who will make himself an elector by the exercise of the social virtues: and will greatly increase,

instead of diminishing, the influence of money in returning Members to Parliament. I believe that in consequence, instead of attaining the end to which so many hon. Members are willing to sacrifice everything, that of putting the question to sleep, and giving a long truce to agitation, this Bill, if it passes with its present provisions, will achieve the unrivalled feat of making a redoublement of agitation both inevitable and indispensable. Thinking these things, I must resist to the utmost these parts of the Bill; and must vote for any Amendment which tends to diminish, either in a great or in a small degree, the obstructions, removeable by money, which the Bill throws in the way of a small householder's acquisition of the suffrage.

PARLIAMENTARY REFORM — REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE BILL — [BILL 79.]

COMMITTEE. [PROGRESS MAY 13.]

HC Deb 17 May 1867 vol 187 cc694-756

MR. J. STUART MILL

It appears to me that the Chancellor of the Exchequer has held out to us a great and splendid concession, which it has been the whole occupation of those of his supporters, who have since spoken, to explain away. In the opinion of some of them, we cannot have the complete embodiment of the principle of the hon. Member (Mr. Hodgkinson); and it appears to be the opinion of the Attorney General that we cannot have that embodiment this year at all. That is to say, we are called upon to pass a Reform Bill this year, and to wait until next year for the measure that is necessary to render that Bill tolerable. In what position will the House be placed if they give way to that? A General Election may occur in the meantime, with all the

evils which have induced us to oppose that part of the Bill which relates to the compound-householders. We ought to have some security against that. We could have some security, but it must consist in something more than mere general words, which, however sincere they may be, are not to be acted upon until after an indefinite time, and in an indefinite way. No one can be more eager or anxious than I am that the arrangement which the Chancellor of the Exchequer has offered to us should be fairly and honourably carried into effect. I am sure we are all most sincere in that. At the same time, it is absolutely necessary that we should not proceed with the clauses relating to compound-householders as preparatory to doing away with compound-householders altogether. The country feel a great deal more doubt about the sincerity of the House than the Chancellor of the Exchequer seems to think, and I do not think the country will believe that we intend to do away with the compound-householders if we pass the Bill this year, and postpone till next the measure for the abolition of compound-householders.

As to the difficulties anticipated by the hon. and learned Member (Mr. Ayrton), and by the last speaker, I will not undertake to say what reality there may be in them; but the greater the practical difficulties in the way of carrying out the principle of my hon. Friend the Member for Newark, the more important and absolutely essential it is that the House should see the Bill by which these things are to be done before they commit themselves to the Bill of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. There is no need to lose time, because there is a great portion of the Bill which does not relate to the borough franchise, and with that we can go on. If we are only assured by the Chancellor of the Exchequer that he will bring in a Bill to give effect to his undertaking, and that we shall see that Bill before we part company with the present one, it would, in my opinion, be the best course to suspend further action upon the borough franchise clauses, and proceed with the other clauses, and only resume the borough

franchise clauses when we have seen the promised Bill. At all events, I think we ought not to read the present Bill a third time until we have read the promised Bill a second time.

PARLIAMENTARY REFORM — REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE BILL — [BILL 79.] 27 June 1867.

COMMITTEE. [PROGRESS JUNE 25.]

EXPENSES.

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J. STUART MILL The right hon. Gentleman who has just addressed the House appears to me to have raised a difficulty which is, in fact, no difficulty at all, and which he himself pointed out the means of removing. The obvious remedy against relieving the sham candidate, who might have the show of hands, at the cost of the bonâ fide candidate, with a chance of election, was to require deposits from all. But I cannot help thinking that a great deal too much is said of the danger of sham candidates. The expense of the hustings, or the returning officer's expenses, are not only a very small part of the expense of elections as they now are; but I am afraid bear a very small proportion to the expense which it is impossible to prevent. Though a great amount of expense, which, though not corrupt, is very noxious, ought to be, and can be, prevented, it is impossible to prevent, or defray out of a public fund, such expenses as those of advertisements, printing, public meetings to address the electors.

The candidates of whom all seem so much afraid, and who have no chance of being elected, cannot present themselves to the electors

without incurring a certain amount of these expenses, and if they cannot pay these it is obvious nobody need care for their candidature. The hon. and learned Member for the Tower Hamlets (Mr. Ayrton) has said that if this sham candidature is kept up, the counties or the other candidates may be put to expense. But I have no doubt the general opinion would so strongly condemn this, that it would be hardly possible for anyone who cares for the opinion of the constituency, and wishes to make himself favourably known to them, to present himself in this capacity.

It may happen, perhaps, or the public may be led to think, that under this horror of sham candidates there is concealed a greater fear of real candidates. This is, as was well observed by the hon. Member for Stoke-upon-Trent (Mr. Beresford Hope), part of a much greater question, that of election expenses generally, with which, in all its parts, this House must necessarily have to deal; and I hope it will see the necessity of dealing with it soon. But this particular expense, though, a small part of the total cost of elections, is a part which it is really in the power of the House to control. It is a necessary part of the expenditure of the country, like any other portion of the public charges.

If a foreigner asked how this country provided for that part of its expenditure which attends the election of its representatives, would he not be astonished to hear that it was done by a tax on candidates? Of all sorts of taxation, was there ever such a partial and unjust specimen as that would be? But it is really a great deal worse. I can compare it to nothing short of requiring a Judge to pay large sums towards the cost of the administration of justice. It is true that you make men pay for commissions in the army, but you do not apply the price of these commissions towards defraying the expense of the army. Does this House, in any other case, arrange to defray

any part of the necessary expenses of the country by a special tax on the individuals who carry on its service?

The hon. Member for Stoke-upon-Trent (Mr. Beresford Hope), though he has fears of the consequences of the constitutional change we are making, which I by no means share, has expressed an anxiety in which, I think, we must all participate: a sense of the duty under which this House and the country now lie, to provide for educating, in the morality of politics, that large class who are now for the first time to be admitted to the electoral suffrage. What sort of a lesson are we giving them; what sort of instructions do we offer, when we lead them to believe that the great trust of legislating for this country is a thing to be paid for, that it is worth while paying for it, and that men can be made to pay for it? What more natural than that they should think it might as well be paid for directly to those who confer it?

The noble Lord who spoke earlier in the debate (Lord Hotham) seems to consider that the law of demand and supply should be left to regulate these matters, so that, in fact, those who are willing to pay money should have a clear field, and that the representation should be knocked down to the highest bidder. That is, perhaps, to a certain extent, done already; but the House ought not to extend and perpetuate the practice.

There is in this country a large and growing class of persons who have suddenly and rapidly acquired wealth, and to whom it is worth any sacrifice of money to obtain social position. The less they have to recommend them in any other respect, the less chance they have of obtaining a place in what is called good society, esteem, either by qualities useful and ornamental, the more sure they are to resort, if they can, to the only infallible and ready means of gaining their end, the obtaining a seat in this House. This is a growing evil which ought to be guarded against.

I hope the Government will deal with this subject in all its parts, as it is certainly highly needful to do; but we have now an opportunity of dealing with one part which is entirely in our control, and which forms an element of the question we are now discussing. We can deal with that small part of election expenses which is an unavoidable part of the expense of governing the country, and which, though the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Oxfordshire (Mr. Henley) said it would be extremely shabby to throw on the constituencies, I think it would be a monstrous deal more shabby to throw on the candidates.

When a man has no personal object of his own to gain by obtaining a seat in this House, it is not for the House to require that he should pay the expense which the country and the electors incur by his election: if he has any such object, we ought to do everything in our power, and to throw every obstacle in his way, to prevent him from obtaining it by money. Above all, it is our duty to show to the new electors, and that large portion of the old who, I am sorry to say, still need the lesson, that the business of election is a thing far removed from aught of buying and selling; that the business of a Member of this House is a laborious and onerous task, and when not sought from personal motives, one which it requires a high sense of public duty to undertake, and that the burthen, therefore, ought not to be increased by throwing any part of the expense on the candidate. We ought, above all things, to show the electors that they are doing what we and the world consider disgraceful, if they put the candidate to any expense, and thus tempt him to use his seat for his personal advantage.

PARLIAMENTARY REFORM — REPRESENTATION OF THE
PEOPLE BILL. — [BILL 302.]

CONSIDERATION.

HC Deb 08 August 1867 vol 189 cc1108-99

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MR. J. STUART MILL It is scarcely possible that the House will be induced to pass, or that the Government will attempt to force upon the House, this really monstrous proposal. The vast mass of fraud to which it would give birth has been shown, but it will produce effects worse than even that mass of fraud. If the House have the smallest desire to diminish bribery and intimidation — if they do not wish to increase it to an enormous extent, they will refuse to assent to this Amendment. If it passes, every tenant may be taken to the drawing-room of his landlord and there compelled to sign his voting paper. Do not we know what electioneering agents will do? Will they not take the voter before the magistrate who has the greatest power over him? This will become the general rule of the country. I do not say that bribery will be as universal as intimidation. But the voting papers are to be signed before a magistrate, and, recollect, Mr. Churchward is a magistrate. When I heard that the Upper House had adopted this principle. I did expect something decent would be done to place checks and restraints on its consequences. I could not have believed that any serious person pretending to the character of a politician would have brought forward such a set of rules, which are apparently constructed to aggravate instead of diminishing the mischievous operation of the system. I should prefer that no Reform Bill should be passed, rather than that this monstrous scheme should be carried into effect.

ELECTION PETITIONS AND CORRUPT PRACTICES AT ELECTIONS (recommitted) BILL — [BILL 63.]

COMMITTEE.

HC Deb 21 May 1868 vol 192 cc657-92

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MR. J. STUART MILL

said, he had to move an Amendment to the clause, which was the first of a series of Amendments, of which he had given Notice. The Bill, as it stood, was very incomplete; but, at the same time, he thought it, in the main, very creditable to the Government; and therefore he was glad that this Bill was not to be part of the baggage to be thrown overboard, for the purpose of lightening the ship on its last voyage. Incomplete as it was, the Bill was a bold attempt to grapple with an acknowledged political and moral evil; and the Government had not feared to ask the House to do what it greatly disliked — to make a sacrifice of its own jurisdiction. He now asked the Prime Minister to complete his own work — to help those who were trying to help him, and lend the aid of his ingenious and contriving mind, and the able legal assistance with which he was provided, to make this really an efficacious and complete measure. It was no party measure, and no party were interested in passing it, except the party of honesty.

They desired to diminish the number of men in this House, who came in, not for the purpose of maintaining any political opinions whatever, but solely for the purpose, by a lavish expenditure, of acquiring the social position which attended a seat in this House, and which, perhaps, was not otherwise to be attained by them. They

were not more attached to one side than to the other, except that they were generally to be found on the gaining side. They were the political counterparts of those who were contemptuously described by Dante as "neither for God nor the enemies of God, but for themselves only." Unfortunately, it was not possible in this case to follow the poet's advice, "Speak not of them, but look and pass on!"

The Bill proceeded on the theory that the law was to be put in motion by the defeated candidate alone. This was contrary to the very idea of criminal law. When the law intended to confer a pardoning power on an individual, it did not grant a criminal process at all, but only an action for damages. The immediate object of the present Amendment was the following: the Bill, if passed, would repeal the 5 & 6 Vict. c. 102; but Section 4 of that Act contained an important provision — namely, that where a Petition complained of general or extensive bribery, and the Committee reported that there was reasonable and probable ground for the allegations, the Committee should have power to order that the costs of the petitioners should be borne by the public. If the House was in earnest such a provision was indispensable; and he therefore intended to propose Amendments, the effect of which would be to restore it in the present Bill.

§ Amendment proposed, in page 2, line 29, after the words "to serve in Parliament," to insert the words "or of general or extensive prevalence of corrupt practices in an Election." -- (Mr. Mill.)

ELECTION PETITIONS AND CORRUPT PRACTICES AT
ELECTIONS (recommitted) BILL — [BILL 63.]

Is it fair or reasonable to take advantage of a technical difficulty in order to leave a question of this sort undecided until after the next election? If in a purely legal point of view it does not belong to the subject of corrupt practices, yet it belongs to a system of measures of which that relating to corrupt practices is the completion. Unless it be agreed to, the system will be left incomplete, and the Reform Act will, in some important respects, actually deteriorate the representation, for its practical effect will be to bring us nearer to a plutocracy than we ever have been before. I would most earnestly appeal to the hon. Member for Suffolk (Mr. Corrance), who has made so excellent a speech in favour of the proposition, to put for the present in abeyance his objections to any additional burthen on the local rates—objections in which, as I have stated on a former occasion, I in part agree, and which will certainly, with the whole subject of the incidence of rates, come under the early consideration of the new Parliament. I beg him to trust the fairness and sense of justice of the future House of Commons, and not to resist a provision required for the beneficial working of our political institutions, because it involves a very small, and probably temporary, addition to the local expenditure.

ELECTION PETITIONS AND CORRUPT PRACTICES AT
ELECTIONS [recommitted] BILL — [BILL 63.]

COMMITTEE. [Progress, 10th July.]

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MR. J. STUART MILL

The addition which I propose to this clause is one of great importance, since it raises the question of providing better security against corrupt practices in municipal, as well as Parliamentary elections. No one is likely to deny that bribery in municipal elections deserves repression as much, and is as unfit to be tolerated or indulged, as bribery in Parliamentary elections; and the special reason why it should be dealt with in this Bill is that, as we are told by all who know anything about the matter, municipal bribery is the great school of Parliamentary bribery. Hon. Members of this House have on a former occasion testified to this fact from their personal knowledge, and I shall quote only two authorities for it.

One is that eminent Conservative solicitor, Mr. Philip Rose, formerly as intimately known to hon. Gentleman opposite as his partner, Mr. Spofforth, now is. Mr. Rose, before the Select Committee of this House on Corrupt Practices, in 1860, expressed himself in these words — “My strong opinion is, that all the efforts which are now being made to check bribery at Parliamentary elections will fail, for this reason, that you do not attempt to strike at the root of the offence. The real nursery for the evil is the municipal contests; and those oft-recurring contests have led to the establishment of what I might almost term an organized system of corruption in the municipal boroughs throughout the kingdom, which provides a machinery ready made to hand, available when the Parliamentary contest arrives.”

My next authority is the Committee itself, before whom this evidence was given, and who reported — “That it has been proved to the satisfaction of your Committee, that an intimate connection exists between bribery at municipal and Parliamentary elections, and it is expedient that the provisions as to punishments and forfeitures for the offences of bribery at each such election should be assimilated as far as possible.” Notwithstanding this recommendation of the

Select Committee, which I hope that the next House of Commons will see the propriety of adopting in its integrity, I have not ventured to propose that the present Bill should provide a machinery for the investigation and punishment of corrupt practices at municipal elections. But I do propose, by the present Amendment, and by an additional clause which will follow in due course, that when the machinery which the Bill does provide for the investigation of corrupt practices at Parliamentary elections is actually set in motion, the inquiry may extend to municipal as well as to Parliamentary corruption.

If the House adopt my Amendment, the Special Commission, which is already empowered to inquire into Parliamentary elections previous to that which caused the issue of the Commission, will have the power conferred on it of inquiring, to exactly the same extent, into previous municipal elections. By the additional clause, the Judge who tries an Election Petition, may take evidence to prove that an elector who voted at the Parliamentary election had been guilty of corrupt practices at any municipal election within two years previous, for the purpose, of course, of showing that his vote was corruptly influenced at the Parliamentary election. The period of two years is selected with reference to the term fixed by the 56th clause of the Municipal Corporations Act; and I confidently claim, both for the Amendment and for the new clause, the support of all hon. Members who really desire to lay the axe at the root of electoral corruption. The hon. Member moved to add at the end of the clause the following words:— “And it shall be competent for any such Commission to inquire into corrupt practices at previous municipal Elections within the county or borough as fully as into corrupt practices at previous Parliamentary Elections.”

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proposed, in page 14, line 11, to insert after "on the whole successful" the words— "And in the case of any such Petition where any corrupt practice is charged to have taken place, and where the court or judge has decided that any corrupt practice has been proved, the court or judge shall have power to order any portion or the whole of the costs, charges, and expenses to be defrayed by any party or parties who may have been proved guilty of corrupt practices, or by the county or borough, in the same manner as expenses incurred in the registration of voters for the county or borough, regard being had to the importance of securing the beat efforts of the county or borough for repression of corrupt practices." "In the case of any Petition complaining of general or extensive prevalence of corrupt practices, if the court or judge shall be of opinion that there was reasonable and probable ground for its allegations, the petitioner or petitioners shall be relieved of all costs, charges, and expenses incurred in and about the inquiry, and it shall be in the power of the court or judge to distribute the said costs, charges, and expenses in such proportions as it or he may think fit between parties who shall have been found guilty of corrupt practices, or who shall have caused expense by vexatious conduct, unfounded allegations, or unfounded objections, and the county or borough, as the case may be, the expenses charged on the county or borough to be defrayed in the same manner as expenses incurred in the registration of voters for the county or borough."

The principle of this Amendment is that to bring to light, and prosecute to conviction, acts of bribery or other corruption at elections, is a public service; and that, being a public service, those who are judicially decided to have performed that service ought not to be required to pay the expenses of it from their private purse. It is enough that they take upon themselves the risk of failing to establish the charge, which, we all know, may easily, and does frequently, happen when it is perfectly notorious that the charge is true. But

when it has been proved true, and is judicially declared to be so proved, I maintain that the Petitioners have a clear moral right to be indemnified for the expense. Their first claim, no doubt, is upon the parties who, through their instrumentality, have been found guilty; but the Judge may not always think fit to inflict even upon proved corruption, so heavy a penalty as the entire expenses of the Petition; and it will often happen that the parties have not the means of paying it. I propose, therefore that the Judge should have the power of apportioning the expense in whatever manner he deems most just, between the persons convicted of corrupt practices, and the county or borough.

ELECTION PETITIONS AND CORRUPT PRACTICES AT ELECTIONS BILL.

[BILL 243]. THIRD READING.

HC Deb 24 July 1868 vol 193 cc1715-32

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The hon. Gentleman who has just sat down seems to think that unexpensiveness and purity of election is a matter which affects the electors only, and that the non-electors have no interest in the matter—a view in which I confess I do not share. I do not propose to revive the question of how far the Government has treated us fairly in regard to this matter. We must accept the statement of the First Minister of the Crown that at the time when he replied to the question of the hon. Member for Bradford (Mr. W. E. Forster) the Government

had no intention of opposing this clause. But when the right hon. Gentleman proceeds to give a history—the correctness of which is countersigned by the right hon. Member for Oxfordshire (Mr. Henley) — of what has passed, and says that the House have rejected as ineffectual all propositions to reconcile the scheme of the hon. Member for Brighton (Mr. Fawcett) with the desirableness of giving security against vexatious contests, I cannot assent to the correctness of his statement.

There was not one of the proposals made which would not, in the opinion of the supporters of the clause, have proved perfectly effectual. The objections did not turn on the efficacy of the proposals, but on which of them was most likely to pass the House. They were overthrown by the action of the Government, but the right hon. Gentleman has not shown that there would be any difficulty in working them. The course pursued fully illustrates the old proverb "None so deaf as those who won't hear." Does anyone think that if the right hon. Gentleman applied his mind to the subject every difficulty would not quickly vanish? We have an apt illustration of the mountain-like magnitude that molehill objections may assume, in the argument of one hon. Gentleman — that if a little more money than enough is taken from the county rate for the purpose of paying election expenses it will be impossible to know what to do with the balance. We have heard of lions in the path, but difficulties such as these are snails or earwigs in the path, and not lions. Were the Government aware of the feeling of satisfaction that went through the country along with the news that the clause of the hon. Member for Brighton was carried, they would, I think, instead of throwing technical difficulties in the way of its adoption, rather bring it in in the form of a separate Bill than lose the chance of its passing. I hope, therefore, that the Motion to re-commit the Bill will be carried.

PARLIAMENTARY REFORM — REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE (IRELAND) BILL.

Hansard 15 June 1868.

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said, he thought that if the House was in earnest on this subject of Parliamentary Reform in Ireland there ought to be no hesitation in dealing with the question now before the Committee. If they decided upon granting the suffrage to the Irish people, they ought to give all possible facilities for the exercise of the voting power. Those facilities ought not, however, to be provided at the expense of the candidates, but of the public; and even if carriages were necessary for the conveyance of voters to the poll, these also ought to be provided at the public cost. Additional; polling places were provided in the English Reform Bill, and if, being necessary in Ireland, they were not provided by the Legislature, what would the Irish Reform Bill be worth after all? There were numbers of places in England much larger than those in Ireland for which exemptions were now sought, and, in his opinion, exceptions ought only to be made in extreme cases.

John Stuart Mill, Letters: proportional representation, and other issues.

Extracts from *The Letters of John Stuart Mill*
edited by Hugh S R Elliot. Published by Longmans, Green and Co.
1910.

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Subjects:

Hare system: proportional representation as personal representation.

[Economy](#), environment and womens suffrage.

English aristocratic and [reactionary sentiment](#).

Hare system: proportional representation as personal representation.

To Thomas Hare, 3 march 1859:

You appear to me to have exactly, and for the first time, solved the difficulty of popular representation - and by doing so, to have raised up the cloud of gloom and uncertainty which hung over the future of representative government and therefore of civilization.

To James Lorimer, 7 april 1859:

You do not at all exaggerate the English dislike of theory, and of any particular suggestion which is at all out of the common way.

...when, as in the case of Hare's plan, there is really no obstacle to its adoption but the novelty of the idea, we should always, I think, talk and write about it as if that were no obstacle at all.

To Thomas Hare, 17 june 1859:

I suppose you will give brief and pungent answers to the popular objections against this plan, which are only expressions in varied phrase of the popular inability to understand it. When there is anything definite in the objections the truth is generally the reverse of what is asserted. For instance, it is supposed the plan would enable minorities to govern, when the fact is that *now* a minority very often governs (by being the majority of a majority), while under your plan a minority never could by any possibility do so. It is the only plan that ensures government by the majority.

All parties seem to have joined in working the vices and weak points of popular representation for their miserably low selfish ends, instead of uniting to free representative institutions from the mischief and discredit of them.

To C A Cummings (Boston U.S.) 23 feb. 1863:

But I attach far more importance to Mr Hare's system of election, which it gives me the greatest pleasure to see you appreciate as I do. It would be worthy of America to inaugurate an improvement which is at once a more complete application than has ever been made of the democratic principle, and at the same time its greatest safeguard. With the system of representation of all instead of majorities only, and of the whole people instead of only the male sex, America would afford to the world the first example in history of true democratic equality.

To Earl Grey, 13 may 1864:

Mr Hare's plan...has been several times discussed in the legislatures of the two principal Australian colonies; and, though not yet adopted, I have been struck by the proof given in the debates how perfectly the great majority of speakers, both Conservative and Radical, understood it, and how generally the best of them on both sides supported it. I feel confident that it would require nothing for success but a real desire in the public to make it succeed. This does not yet exist in England, but in a colony there is far less prejudice against novelties. In Australia, Conservatives favour the plan as a check to the absolute power of numerical majorities, and Democrats because it is a direct and obvious corollary from the democratic principle.

To Max Kyllman, 15 feb. 1865:

(After refering to "the progress of Mr Hare's system among the working classes of Manchester.") When any portion or body of the working classes chooses as its programme a reading and writing (or

rather writing and ciphering) qualification, *adult* instead of manhood suffrage, and Hare's system, I will gladly give to such a noble scheme all the help I possibly can.

To Max Kyllman, 30 may 1865:

Numbers of country papers are sent to me in which Hare's system, representation of minorities, in all its shapes, and women's suffrage are mooted - sometimes with approbation, and often (especially as to women's suffrage) with much less hostility than was to be expected. You have probably seen Mr Hughes' declaration in favour of Hare's system, and Francis Newman's commendation of me for adhering to it.

To Henry Fawcett, 1 jan. 1866:

I have just seen that Lord Hobart has come out decidedly...for Hare's system.

To G K Holden, Member of Legislative Council of New South Wales, 5 july 1868:

I well remember your exertions for the adoption of Mr Hare's system in the election of the Legislative Council, and the very valuable report in which you discussed the subject. The debates in the British Parliament which have since occurred may well have struck you with the amount of ignorance they disclosed; but great and daily progress is making in the correction of that ignorance, and many political men, including some of the most active and intelligent leaders of the working classes are now converted to Mr Hare's system in principle

at least, and frequently even in its detail. The doctrine of personal representation is making the same rapid progress among thinking minds on the Continent and in America.

(*Note:* Baden minister, Prof. Mohl of Heidelberg advocated Hare plan in the Zeit of Frankfort.

It was also publically supported in France by Louis Blanc and Laboulaye. These three are among those meant, in the footnote at the end of chapter VII to *Representative Government*. But Mill did not give their names there.)

To General Secretary of Chelsea Working Mens Parliamentary Electoral Association, 7 dec. 1868, replying to their condolences on his defeat:

Public opinion will in time demand the only complete remedy, the adoption of Personal Representation, by which the electors would be enabled to group themselves as they pleased, and any electors who chose to combine could be represented in exact proportion to their number by men of their own personal choice... The real cause of the failure of working-class candidates and of so many of the advanced Liberals in the late contests is the inordinate expense of elections.

Economy, environment and womens suffrage.

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In a letter of jan. 1850,

Mill said: "...when productive employment can be claimed by everyone from the public as a right, it can only be rendered undesirable by being made virtually slave labour." Mill was against such a right being enforced, until society makes "the production and distribution of wealth a public concern."

To W T Thornton, 23 oct. 1863:

You are aware that I would, if I could exempt savings from income tax, and make the tax on income virtually a tax on expenditure. By this rule any portion of income should be only taxed if spent on private uses, but should be free from taxation (at least at its origin) when devoted to public ends.

To Secretary of the Co-operative Plate-Lock Manufactory, Wolverhampton, 22 march 1865:

Sir, - I beg to enclose a subscription of £10 to aid, as far as such a sum can do it, in the struggle which the Co-operative Plate-Lock Makers of Wolverhampton are maintaining against unfair competition on the part of the masters in the trade...To carry on business at a loss in order to ruin competitors is not fair competition... Having the strongest sympathy with your vigorous attempt to make head against what in such a case may justly be called the tyranny of capital, I beg you to send me a dozen copies of your printed appeal, to assist me in making the case known to such persons as it may interest in your favour.

[Editorial note: In my book, *Science is Ethics as Electrics*, my chapter on Constitutional Economics quotes Mill letter on industrial partnership.]

To the secretary, 22 jan. 1866, to support the founding of the Commons Preservation Society:

I have all my life been strongly impressed with the importance of preserving as much as possible of such free space for healthful exercise and for the enjoyment of natural beauty as the growth of population and cultivation has still left to us. The desire to engross the whole surface of the earth in the mere production of the greatest possible quantity of food and the materials of manufacture, I consider to be founded on a mischievously narrow conception of the requirements of human nature.

[Editor: In a letter on his visit to William Wordsworth, Mill observed the views from the poets pavilion form an abridgement of the whole Westmoreland side of the mountains; every spot visible from it has been immortalised in his poems.]

To Judge Chapman, 7 jan. 1866:

Your account of the Middle Island and its impassable range of high Alps is very attractive to me, and if New Zealand were an island in the Northern Atlantic would speedily send me on a visit there... There is now almost no place left on our own planet that is mysterious to us and we are brought within sight of the practical questions which will

have to be faced when the multiplied human race shall have taken full possession of the earth (and exhausted its principal fuel).

To J K H Willcox, of New York, 20 jan. 1871:

I have long been of the opinion expressed by you "that the cause of over-population," or at all events a necessary condition of it, "is woman's subjugation, and that the cure is her enfranchisement."

[Editor: Robert Macnamara held a statistical investigation, into the causes of over-population, which found only one practically perfect correlation, female illiteracy.]

Letter on womens aspirations, 14 july 1869:

The most important thing women have to do is to stir up the zeal of women themselves. We have to stimulate their aspirations - to bid them not despair of anything, nor think anything beyond their reach, but try their faculties against all difficulties. In no other way can the verdict of experience be fairly collected, and in no other way can we excite the enthusiasm in women which is necessary to break down the old barriers.

English aristocratic and reactionary sentiment.

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To John Austin, 13 april 1847:

England has never had any general break-up of old associations, and hence the extreme difficulty of getting any ideas into its stupid head.

To F Lucas, 28 march 1851. Reply to invitation from the Council of the Tenant League, to stand for an Irish constituency of parliament.

If it were in my power to go into Parliament at present, I should be highly gratified by being returned for a purpose so congenial to my principles and convictions as the reform of the pernicious system of land tenure which, more than any other cause, keeps the great body of the agricultural population of Ireland always on the verge of starvation.

To Giuseppi Mazzini on an International Society for political objects, april 1858:

The English, of all ranks and classes, are at bottom, in all their feelings, aristocrats. They have the conception of liberty, and set some value on it, but the very idea of equality is strange and offensive to them. They do not dislike to have many people above them as long as they have some below them, and therefore they have never sympathised and in their present state of mind never will sympathise with any really democratic or republican party in other countries. They keep what sympathy they have to those whom they look upon as imitators of English institutions - Continental Whigs who desire to introduce constitutional forms and some securities against personal oppression - leaving in other aspects the old order of things with all its inequalities and social injustices; and any people, who are

not willing to content themselves with this, are thought unfit for liberty.

To J F D Maurice, 11 may 1865:

I sympathise with the feeling of (if I may so call it) mental loneliness, which shows itself in your letter and sometimes in your published writings. In our age and country every person with any mental power at all, who both thinks for himself and has a conscience, must feel himself, to a very great degree, alone.

To Parke Godwin, 15 may 1865, in a letter of tribute to the assassinated President Lincoln:

(Lincoln was) the great citizen who had afforded so noble an example of the qualities befitting the first magistrate of a free people, and who in the most trying circumstances had gradually won not only the admiration, but almost the personal affection of all who love freedom and appreciate simplicity and uprightness.

...though there is a portion of the higher and middle classes of Great Britain who so dread and hate democracy that they cannot wish prosperity or power to a democratic people, I firmly believe that this feeling is not general even in our privileged classes.

To David Urquhart, the diplomat, 4 oct. 1866:

You approve of my speech because you say I am not on this occasion standing up for the negroes, or for liberty, deeply as both are interested in the subject - but for the first necessity of human society, law. One would have thought that when this was the matter

in question, all political parties might be expected to be unanimous. But my eyes were first opened to the moral condition of the English nation (I except in these matters the working classes) by the atrocities perpetrated in the Indian Mutiny, and the feelings which supported them at home. Then came the sympathy with the lawless rebellion of the Southern Americans in defence of an institution which is the sum of all lawlessness, as Wesley said it was of all villainy - and finally came this Jamaica business, the authors of which, from the first day I knew of it, I determined that I would do all in my power to bring to justice if there was not another man in Parliament to stand by me. You rightly judge that there is no danger of my sacrificing such a purpose to any personal advancement...

To the Secretary of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, 26 July, 1868:

I do not feel it consistent... to identify myself to any greater extent with the management, while it is thought necessary or advisable to limit the Society's operations to the offences committed by the uninfluential classes of society. So long as such scenes as the pigeon-shooting exhibitions lately commented upon in the newspapers take place under the patronage and in the presence of the supposed elite of the higher classes, male and female, without attracting the notice of your Society, this respect of persons, though it may be prudent, is too foreign to my opinions and feelings to allow of my sharing in any, even indirect, responsibility for it.

To Edwin Chadwick, 2 May 1869:

Lord Russell's Bill, and its favourable reception by the Lords, was no otherwise of importance than of showing the need which the Lords

feel of strengthening their position. So small a number of life members would do little good even if they were always honestly selected, which they will not be. A few good names may be put in at first, but as a rule the life peerage will be a refuge for the mediocrities of past administrations. If now and then a thoughtful and vigorous man gets in, he will no doubt have the means of publicly speaking his thoughts, but to an inattentive audience; for the peers are too stupid and too conservative to be moved except by a party leader who they think will carry obstructiveness to the utmost limits of practicability; and the public pay little attention to speeches in the House of Lords.

I doubt if a second chamber can ever again carry weight in English politics unless popularly elected...

These are my opinions, but I do not wish to throw cold water on anything which acknowledges an evil and points in the direction of an improvement.

[Editor: Note the prescience of these comments by Mill on that interminable scandal, the House of Lords.]

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Philosophy. — Stuart Mill.

by Hippolyte Taine.

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Preface

M. Taine has published this "Study on Mill" separately, and preceded it by the following note, as a preface :— When this Study first appeared, Mr. Mill did me the honour to write to me that it would not be possible to give in a few pages a more exact and complete notion of the contents of his work, considered as a body of philosophical teaching. But, he added, " I think you are wrong in regarding the views I adopt as especially English. They were so in the first half of the eighteenth century, from the time of Locke to that of the reaction against Hume. This reaction, beginning in Scotland, assumed long ago the German form, and ended by prevailing universally.*

When I wrote my book, I stood almost alone in my opinions ; and though they have met with a degree of sympathy which I by no means expected, we may still count in England twenty a priori and spiritualist philosophers for every partisan of the doctrine of Experience."

This remark is very true. I myself could have made it, having been brought up in the doctrines of Scotch philosophy and the writings of Reid. I simply answer, that there are philosophers whom we do not count, and that all such, whether English or not, spiritualist or not, may be neglected without much harm.

Once in a half century, or perhaps in a century, or two centuries, some thinker appears ; Bacon and Hume in England, Descartes and Condillac in France, Kant and Hegel in Germany. At other times the stage is unoccupied, or ordinary men come forward, and offer the public that which the public likes — Sensualists or Idealists, according to the tendency of the day, with sufficient instruction and skill to play leading parts, and enough capacity to re-set old airs, well drilled in the works of their predecessors, but destitute of real invention — simple executant musicians, who stand in the place of composers. In Europe, at present, the stage is a blank. The Germans adapt and alter effete French materialism. The French listen from habit, but somewhat wearily and distractedly, to the scraps of melody and eloquent commonplace which their instructors have repeated to them for the last thirty years. In this deep silence, and from among these dull mediocrities, a master comes forward to speak. Nothing of the sort has been seen since Hegel.

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III. Indications and splendour of free thought — New exegesis — Stuart Mill —

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Philosophy -- Stuart Mill.

Philosophy in England.

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WHEN at Oxford some years ago, during the meeting of the British Association, I met, amongst the few students still in residence, a young Englishman, a man of intelligence, with whom I became intimate. He took me in the evening to the New Museum, well filled with specimens. Here short lectures were delivered, new models of machinery were set to work ; ladies were present and took an interest in the experiments ; on the last day, full of enthusiasm, God save the Queen was sung. I admired this zeal, this solidity of mind, this organisation of science, these voluntary subscriptions, this aptitude for association and for labour, this great machine pushed on by so many arms, and so well fitted to accumulate, criticise, and classify facts. But yet, in this abundance, there was a void ; when I read the Transactions, I thought I was present at a congress of heads of manufactories. All these learned men verified details and exchanged recipes. It was as though I listened to foremen, busy in communicating their processes for tanning leather or dyeing cotton : general ideas were wanting. I used to regret this to my friend; and in the evening, by his lamp, amidst that great silence in which the university town lay wrapped, we both tried to discover its reasons.

IL

One day I said to him : You lack philosophy — I mean, what the Germans call metaphysics. You have learned men, but you have no thinkers. Your God impedes you. He is the Supreme Cause, and you dare not reason on causes, out of respect for him. He is the most important personage in England, and I see clearly that he merits his position ; for he forms part of your constitution, he is the guardian of your morality, he judges in final appeal on all questions whatsoever, he replaces with advantage the prefects and gendarmes with whom the nations on the Continent are still encumbered. Yet, this high rank has the inconvenience of all official positions ; it produces a cant, prejudices, intolerance, and courtiers.

Here, close by us, is poor Mr. Max Müller, who, in order to acclimatise the study of Sanscrit, was compelled to discover in the Vedas the worship of a moral God, that is to say, the religion of Paley and Addison. Some time ago, in London, I read a proclamation of the Queen, forbidding people to play cards, even in their own houses, on Sundays. It seems that, if I were robbed, I could not bring my thief to justice without taking a preliminary religious oath ; for the judge has been known to send a complainant away who refused to take the oath, deny him justice, and insult him into the bargain. Every year, when we read the Queen's speech in your papers, we find there the compulsory mention of Divine Providence, which comes in mechanically, like the apostrophe to the immortal gods on the fourth page of a rhetorical declamation ; and you remember that once, the pious phrase having been omitted, a second communication was made to Parliament for the express purpose of supplying it.

All these cavillings and pedantry indicate to my mind a celestial monarchy; naturally it resembles all others ; I mean that it relies more willingly on tradition and custom than on examination and reason. A monarchy never invited men to verify its credentials. As yours is, however, useful, well adapted to you, and moral, you are

not revolted by it ; you submit to it without difficulty, you are, at heart, attached to it ; you would fear, in touching it, to disturb the constitution and morality. You leave it in the clouds, amidst public homage. You fall back upon yourselves, confine yourselves to matters of fact, to minute dissections, to experiments in the laboratory. You go culling plants and collecting shells. Science is deprived of its head ; but all is for the best, for practical life is improved, and dogma remains intact.

III.

You are truly French, he answered ; you leap over facts, and all at once find yourself settled in a theory. I assure you that there are thinkers amongst us, and not far from hence, at Christ Church, for instance. One of them, the professor of Greek, has spoken so deeply on inspiration, the creation and final causes, that he is out of favour. Look at this little collection which has recently appeared. Essays and Reviews; your philosophic freedom of the last century, the latest conclusions of geology and cosmogony, the boldness of German exegesis, are here in abstract. Some things are wanting, amongst others the waggeries of Voltaire, the misty jargon of Germany, and the prosaic coarseness of Comte ; to my mind, the loss is small. Wait twenty years, and you will find in London the ideas of Paris and Berlin. — But they will still be the ideas of Paris and Berlin.

Whom have you that is original ? —

Stuart Mill. — Who is he? — A political writer. His little book *On Liberty* is as admirable as Rousseau's *Contrat Social* is bad. — That is a bold assertion. — No, for Mill decides as strongly for the independence of the individual as Rousseau for the despotism of the State. —

Very well, but that is not enough to make a philosopher. What besides is he ? — An economist who goes beyond his science, and subordinates production to man, instead of man to production. —

Well, but this is not enough to make a philosopher. Is he anything else ? — A logician. Very good ; but of what school ? — Of his own. I told you he was original. — Is he Hegelian ? — By no means ; he is too fond of facts and proofs. — Does he follow Port-Royal ? — Still less ; he is too well acquainted with modern sciences. — Does he imitate Condillac ? — Certainly not ; Condillac has only taught him to write well. —

Who, then, are his friends ? — Locke and Comte in the first rank ; then Hume and Newton. — Is he a system-monger, a speculative reformer ? — He has too much sense for that ; he only arranges the best theories, and explains the best methods. He does not attitudinise majestically in the character of a restorer of science ; he does not declare, like your Germans, that his book will open up a new era for humanity. He proceeds gradually, somewhat slowly, often creepingly, through a multitude of particular facts. He excels in giving precision to an idea, in disentangling a principle, in discovering it amongst a number of different facts ; in refuting, distinguishing, arguing. He has the astuteness, patience, method, and sagacity of a lawyer. —

Very well, you admit that I was right. A lawyer, an ally of Locke, Newton, Comte, and Hume ; we have here only English philosophy ; but no matter. Has he reached a grand conception of the universe ? — Yes. — Has he an individual and complete idea of nature and the mind ? — Yes, — Has he combined the operations and discoveries of the intellect under a single principle which puts them all in a new light ? — Yes ; but we have to discover this principle. — That is your

business, and I hope you will undertake it. — But I shall fall into abstract generalities. — There is no harm in that ?

— But this close reasoning will be like a quick-set hedge. — We will prick our fingers with it. But three men out of four would cast aside such speculations as idle. — So much the worse for them. For in what does the life of a nation or a century consist, except in the formation of such theories ? We are not thoroughly men unless so engaged.

If some dweller in another planet were to come down here to ask us the nature of our race, we should have to show him the five or six great ideas which we have formed of the mind and the world. That alone would give him the measure of our intelligence. Expound to me your theory, and I shall go away better instructed than after having seen the masses of brick, which you call London and Manchester.

§ 1.— Exposition of Mill's Philosophy!

[To Sections](#)

1. — Experience.

Let us begin, then, at the beginning, like logicians. Mill has written on logic. What is logic ? It is a science. What is its object ? The sciences ; for, suppose that you have traversed the universe, and that you know it thoroughly, stars, earth, sun, heat, gravity, chemical affinities, the species of minerals, geological revolutions, plants,

animals, human events, all that classifications and theories explain and embrace, there still remain these classifications and theories to be learnt.

Not only is there an order of beings, but also an order of the thoughts which represent them ; not only plants and animals, but also botany and zoology ; not only lines, surfaces, volumes, and numbers, but also geometry and arithmetic. Sciences, then, are as real things as facts themselves, and therefore, as well as facts, become the subject of study. We can analyse them as we analyse facts, investigate their elements, composition, order, relations, and object. There is, therefore, a science of sciences ; this science is called logic, and is the subject of Mill's work.

It is no part of logic to analyse the operations of the mind, memory, the association of ideas, external perception, etc. ; that is the business of psychology. We do not discuss the value of such operations, the veracity of our consciousness, the absolute certainty of our elementary knowledge ; this belongs to metaphysics. We suppose our faculties to be at work, and we admit their primary discoveries. We take the instrument as nature has provided it, and we trust to its accuracy. We leave to others the task of taking its mechanism to pieces, and the curiosity which criticises its results. Setting out from its primitive operations, we enquire how they are added to each other ; how they are combined ; how one is convertible into another ; how, by dint of additions, combinations, and transformations, they finally compose a system of connected and increasing truths. We construct a theory of science, as others construct theories of vegetation, of the mind, or of numbers. Such is the idea of logic ; and it is plain that it has, as other sciences, a real subject-matter, its distinct province, its manifest importance, its special method, and a certain future.

II.

Having premised so much, we observe that all these sciences which form the subject of logic, are but collections of propositions, and that each proposition merely connects or separates a subject and an attribute, that is, two names, a quality and a substance ; that is to say, a thing and another thing. We must then ask what we understand by a thing, what we indicate by a name ; in other words, what it is we recognise in objects, what we connect or separate, what is the subject-matter of all our propositions and all our science.

There is a point in which all our several items of knowledge resemble one another. There is a common element which, continually repeated, constitutes all our ideas. There is, as it were, a minute primitive crystal which, indefinitely and variously added to itself, forms the whole mass, and which, once known, teaches us beforehand the laws and composition of the complex bodies which it has formed.

Now, when we attentively consider the idea which we form of anything, what do we find in it ? Take first substances, that is to say, Bodies and Minds.

It is certain, then, that a part of our notion of a body consists of the notion of a number of sensations of our own or of other sentient beings, habitually occurring simultaneously. My conception of the table at which I am writing is compounded of its visible form and size, which are complex sensations of sight ; its tangible form and size, which are complex sensations of our organs of touch and of our muscles ; its weight, which is also a sensation of touch and of the muscles ; its colour, which is a sensation of sight ; its hardness, which is a sensation of the muscles ; its composition, which is another word for all the varieties of sensation which we receive, under various circumstances, from the wood of which it is made ;

and so forth. All or most of these various sensations frequently are, and, as we learn by experience, always might be, experienced simultaneously, or in many different orders of succession, at our own choice : and hence the thought of any one of them makes us think of the others, and the whole becomes mentally amalgamated into one mixed state of consciousness, which, in the language of Locke and Hartley, is termed a Complex Idea. — Mill's System of Logic, 4th ed. 2 vols., i. 62.

This table is brown, long, wide, three feet high, judging by the eye : that is, it forms a little spot in the field of vision ; in other words, it produces a certain sensation on the optic nerve. It weighs ten pounds : that is, it would require to lift it an effort less than for a weight of eleven pounds, and greater than for a weight of nine pounds ; in other words, it produces a certain muscular sensation. It is hard and square, which means that, if first pushed, and then run over by the hand, it will excite two distinct kinds of muscular sensations. And so on.

When I examine closely what I know of it, I find that I know nothing else except the impressions it makes upon me.

Our idea of a body comprises nothing else than this : we know nothing of it but the sensations it excites in us ; we determine it by the nature, number, and order of these sensations ; we know nothing of its inner nature, nor whether it has one; we simply affirm that it is the unknown cause of these sensations. When we say that a body has existed in the absence of our sensations, we mean simply that if, during that time, we had been within reach of it, we should have had sensations which we have not had. We never define it save by our present or past, future or possible, complex or simple impressions. This is so true, that philosophers like Berkeley have maintained, with some show of truth, that matter is a creature of the imagination, and that the whole universe of sense is reducible to an order of

sensations. It is at least so, as far as our knowledge is concerned ; and the judgments which compose our sciences, have reference only to the impressions by which things are manifested to us.

So, again, with the mind. We may well admit that there is in us a soul, an "ego," a subject or recipient of our sensations, and of our other modes of being, distinct from those sensations and modes of existence ; but we know nothing of it. Mr. Mill says :

For, as our conception of a body is that of an unknown exciting cause of sensations, so our conception of a mind is that of an unknown recipient, or percipient, of them ; and not of them alone, but of all our other feelings. As body is the mysterious something which excites the mind to feel, so mind is the mysterious something which feels, and thinks. It is unnecessary to give in the case of mind, as we gave in the case of matter, a particular statement of the sceptical system by which its existence as a Thing in itself, distinct from the series of what are denominated its states, is called in question. But it is necessary to remark, that on the inmost nature of the thinking principle, as well as on the inmost nature of matter, we are, and with our faculties must always remain, entirely in the dark. All which we are aware of, even in our own minds, is a certain "thread of consciousness ;" a series of feelings, that is, of sensations, thoughts, emotions, and volitions, more or less numerous and complicated. J Mill's Logic, i. 68.

We have no clearer idea of mind than of matter ; we can say nothing more about it than about matter. So that substances, of whatever kind, bodies or minds, within or without us, are never for us more than tissues, more or less complex, more or less regular, of which our impressions and modes of being form all the threads. This is still more evident in the case of attributes than of substances. When I say that snow is white, I mean that, when snow is presented to my

sight, I have the sensation of whiteness. When I say that fire is hot, I mean that, when near the fire, I have the sensation of heat.

Every attribute of a mind consists either in being itself affected in a certain way, or affecting other minds in a certain way. Considered in itself, we can predicate nothing of it but the series of its own feelings. When we say of any mind, that it is devout, or superstitious, or meditative, or cheerful, we mean that the ideas, emotions, or volitions implied in those words, form a frequently recurring part of the series of feelings, or states of consciousness, which fill up the sentient existence of that mind.

In addition, however, to those attributes of a mind which are grounded on its own states of feeling, attributes may also be ascribed to it, in the same manner as to a body, grounded on the feelings which it excites in other minds. A mind does not, indeed, like a body, excite sensations, but it may excite thoughts or emotions. The most important example of attributes ascribed on this ground, is the employment of terms expressive of approbation or blame. When, for example, we say of any character, or (in other words) of any mind, that it is admirable, we mean that the contemplation of it excites the sentiment of admiration ; and indeed somewhat more, "for the word implies that we not only feel admiration, but approve that sentiment in ourselves. In some cases, under the semblance of a single attribute, two are really predicated : one of them, a state of the mind itself ; the other, a state with which other minds are affected by thinking of it. As when we say of anyone that he is generous. The word generosity expresses a certain state of mind, but being a term of praise, it also expresses that this state of mind excites in us another mental state, called approbation. The assertion made, therefore, is twofold, and of the following, purport : Certain feelings form habitually a part of this person's sentient existence ; and the

idea of those feelings of his, excites the sentiment of approbation in ourselves or others.' — Mill's Logic, i. 80.

We call a mind devout, superstitious, meditative, or gay, simply meaning that the ideas, the emotions, the volitions, designated by these words, recur frequently in the series of its modes of being. When we say that bodies are heavy, divisible, moveable, we mean simply that, left to themselves, they will fall ; when cut, they will separate ; or when pushed, they will move : that is, under such and such circumstances they will produce such and such a sensation in our muscles, or our sight.

An attribute always designates a mode of being, or a series of our modes of being. In vain we disguise these modes by grouping, concealing them under abstract words, dividing and transforming them, so that we are frequently puzzled to recognise them : whenever we look at the bottom of our words and ideas, we find them, and nothing but them. Mill says:

Take the following example : A generous person is worthy of honour. Who would expect to recognise here a case of coexistence between phenomena ? But so it is. The attribute which causes a person to be termed generous, is ascribed to him on the ground of states of his mind, and particulars of his conduct ; both are phenomena ; the former are facts of internal consciousness, the latter, so far as distinct from the former, are physical facts, or perceptions of the senses.

Worthy of honour, admits of a similar analysis. Honour, as here used, means a state of approving and admiring emotion, followed on occasion by corresponding outward acts. "Worthy of honour" connotes all this, together with an approval of the act of showing honour. All these are phenomena ; states of internal consciousness, accompanied or followed by physical facts. When we say, A generous person is worthy of honour, we affirm coexistence

between the two complicated phenomena connoted by the two terms respectively. "We affirm, that wherever and whenever the inward feelings and outward facts implied in the word generosity, have place, then and there the existence and manifestation of an inward feeling, honour, would be followed in our minds by another inward feeling, approval.

In vain we turn about as we please, we remain still in the same circle. Whether the object be an attribute or a substance, complex or abstract, compound or simple, its material is to us always the same ; it is made up only of our modes of being. Our mind is to nature what a thermometer is to a boiler : we define the properties of nature by the impressions of our mind, as we indicate the conditions of the boiling water by the changes of the thermometer. Of both we know but conditions and changes ; we make up both of isolated and transient facts ; a thing is for us but an aggregate of phenomena. These are the sole elements of our knowledge : consequently the whole effort of science will be to add or to link facts to facts.

III.

This brief phrase is the abstract of the whole system. Let us master it, for it explains all Mill's theories. He has defined and innovated everything from this starting-point. In all forms and all degrees of knowledge, he has recognised only the knowledge of facts, and of their relations.

Now we know that logic has two corner-stones, the Theories of Definition and of Proof. From the days of Aristotle logicians have spent their time in polishing them. They have only dared to touch them respectfully, as if they were sacred. At most, from time to time, some innovator ventured to turn them over cautiously, to put them in a better light. Mill shapes, cuts, turns them over, and replaces them both in a similar manner and by the same means.

I am quite aware that now-a-days men laugh at those who reason on definitions ; the laughers deserve to be laughed at. There is no theory more fertile in universal and important results ; it is the root by which the whole tree of human science grows and lives. For to define things is to mark out their nature. To introduce a new idea of definition is to introduce a new idea of the nature of things ; it is to tell us what beings are, of what they are composed, into what elements they are capable of being resolved. In this lies the merit of these dry speculations ; the philosopher seems occupied with arranging mere formulas ; the fact is, that in them he encloses the universe.

Mill's Logic, i. 110.

Take, say logicians, an animal, a plant, a feeling, a geometrical figure, an object or group of objects of any kind. Doubtless the object has its properties, but it has also its essence. It is manifested to the outer world by an indefinite number of effects and qualities ; but all these modes of being are the results or products of its inner nature. There is within it a certain hidden substratum which alone is primitive and important, without which it can neither exist nor be conceived, and which constitutes its being and our notion of it.

[According to idealist logicians, this being is arrived at by examining our notion of it ; and the idea, on analysis, reveals the essence. According to the classifying school, we arrive at the being by placing the object in its group, and the notion is defined by stating the genus and the difference. Both agree in believing that we are capable of grasping the essence.]

They call the propositions which denote this essence definitions, and assert that the best part of our knowledge consists of such propositions.

[An essential proposition, then, is one which is purely verbal ; which asserts of a thing under a particular name, only what is asserted of it in the fact of calling it by that name ; and which therefore either gives no information, or gives it respecting the name, not the thing. Non-essential or accidental propositions, on the contrary, may be called Real Propositions, in opposition to Verbal. They predicate of a thing, some fact not involved in the signification of the name by which the proposition speaks of it ; some attribute not connoted by that name. — Mill's Logic i 127.]

On the other hand, Mill says that these kinds of propositions teach us nothing ; they show the mere sense of a word, and are purely verbal. What do I learn by being told that man is a rational animal, or that a triangle is a space contained by three lines ? The first part of such a phrase expresses by an abbreviative word what the second part expresses in a developed phrase. You tell me the same thing twice over ; you put the same fact into two different expressions ; you do not add one fact to another, but you go from one fact to its equivalent. Your proposition is not instructive. You might collect a million such, my mind would remain entirely void ; I should have read a dictionary, but not have acquired a single piece of knowledge.

[The definition above given of a triangle obviously comprises not one, but two propositions, perfectly distinguishable. The one is, "There may exist a figure bounded by three straight lines ;" the other, "And this figure may be termed a triangle. " The former of these propositions is not a definition at all ; the latter is a mere nominal definition, or explanation of the use and application of a term. The first is susceptible of truth or falsehood, and may therefore be made the foundation of a train of reasoning. The latter can neither be true nor false ; the only character it is susceptible of is that of conformity to the ordinary usage of language. — Mill's Logic, i. 162.]

Instead of saying that essential propositions are important, and those relating to qualities merely accessory, you ought to say that the first are accessory, and the second important. I learn nothing by being told that a circle is a figure formed by the revolution of a straight line about one of its points as centre ; I do learn something when told that the chords which subtend equal arcs in the circle are themselves equal, or that three given points determine the circumference. What we call the nature of a being is the connected system of facts which constitute that being. The nature of a carnivorous mammal consists in the fact that the property of giving milk, and all its implied peculiarities of structure, are combined with the possession of sharp teeth, instincts of prey, and the corresponding faculties. Such are the elements which compose its nature. They are facts linked together as mesh to mesh in a net. We perceive a few of them ; and we know that, beyond our present knowledge and our future experience, the network extends to infinitely its interwoven and manifold threads. The essence or nature of a being is the indefinite sum of its properties.

Mill's Logic, i. 162. says:

The definition, they say, unfolds the nature of the thing : but no definition can unfold its whole nature ; and every proposition in which any quality whatever is predicated of the thing, unfolds some part of its nature. The true state of the case we take to be this. All definitions are of names, and of names only ; but in some definitions it is clearly apparent, that nothing is intended except to explain the meaning of the word ; while in others, besides explaining the meaning of the word, it is intended to be implied that there exists a thing, corresponding to the word.

Abandon, then, the vain hope of eliminating from properties some primitive and mysterious being, the source and abstract of the whole ; leave entities to Duns Scotus ; do not fancy that, by probing your

ideas in the German fashion, by classifying objects according to genera and species like the schoolmen, by reviving the nominalism of the Middle Ages or the riddles of Hegelian metaphysics, you will ever supply the want of experience. There are no definitions of things ; if there are definitions, they only define names. No phrase can tell me what a horse is ; but there are phrases which will inform me what is meant by these five letters.

No phrase can exhaust the inexhaustible sum of qualities which make up a being ; but several phrases may point out the facts corresponding to a word. In this case definition is possible, because we can always make an analysis, which will enable us to pass from the abstract and summary term to the attributes which it represents, and from these attributes to the inner or concrete feelings which constitute their foundation. From the term "dog" it enables us to rise to the attributes "mammiferous," "carnivorous," and others which it represents; and from these attributes to the sensations of sight, of touch, of the dissecting knife, on which they are founded. It reduces the compound to the simple, the derived to the primitive. It brings back our knowledge to its origin. It transforms words into facts. If some definitions, such as those of geometry, seem capable of giving rise to long sequences of new truths, it is because, in addition to the explanation of a word, they contain the affirmation of a thing. In the definition of a triangle there are two distinct propositions, — the one stating that "there may exist a figure bounded by three straight lines" ; the other, that "such a figure may be termed a triangle." The first is a postulate, the second a definition. The first is hidden, the second evident ; the first may be true or false, the second can be neither. The first is the source of all possible theorems as to triangles, the second only resumes in a word the facts contained in the other. The first is a truth, the second is a convention ; the first is a part of science, the second an expedient of language. The first expresses a possible relation between three

straight lines, the second gives a name to this relation. The first alone is fruitful, because it alone conforms to the nature of every fruitful proposition, and connects two facts.

Let us, then, understand exactly the nature of our knowledge : it relates either to words or to things, or to both at once. If it is a matter of words, as in the definition of names, it attempts to refer words to our primitive feelings, that is to say, to the facts which form their elements. If it relates to beings, as in propositions about things, its whole effort is to link fact to fact, in order to connect the finite number of known properties with the infinite number to be known. If both are involved, as in the definitions of names which conceal a proposition relating to things, it attempts to do both. Everywhere its operation is the same. The whole matter in any case is either to understand each other, — that is, to revert to facts, or to learn, — that is, to add facts to facts.

V.

The first rampart is destroyed ; our adversaries take refuge behind the second — the Theory of Proof. This theory has passed for two thousand years for an acquired, definite, unassailable truth. Many have deemed it useless, but no one has dared to call it false. On all sides it has been considered as an established theorem. Let us examine it closely and attentively. What is a proof? According to logicians, it is a syllogism. And what is a syllogism ? A group of three propositions of this kind : "All men are mortal ; Prince Albert is a man ; therefore Prince Albert is mortal." Here we have the type of a proof, and every complete proof is conformable to this type.

Now what is there, according to logicians, in this proof? A general proposition concerning all men, which gives rise to a particular proposition concerning a certain man. From the first we pass to the second, because the second is contained in the first ; from the

general to the particular, because the particular is comprised in the general. The second is but an instance of the first ; its truth is contained beforehand in that of the first, and this is why it is a truth.

In fact, as soon as the conclusion is no longer contained in the premises, the reasoning is false, and all the complicated rules of the Middle Ages have been reduced by the Port-Royalists to this single rule,

"The conclusion must be contained in the premises. Thus the whole process of the human mind in its reasonings consists in recognising in individuals what is known in the class ; in affirming in detail what has been established for the aggregate ; in laying down a second time, and instance by instance, what has been laid down once for all at first."

By no means, replies Mill ; for if it were so, our reasoning would be good for nothing. It is not a progress, but a repetition. When I have affirmed that all men are mortal, I have affirmed implicitly that Prince Albert is mortal. In speaking of the whole class, that is to say, of all the individuals of the class, I have spoken of each individual, and therefore of Prince Albert, who is one of them. I say nothing new, then, when I now mention him expressly. My conclusion teaches me nothing ; it adds nothing to my positive knowledge ; it only puts in another shape a knowledge which I already possessed. It is not fruitful, but purely verbal. If, then, reasoning be what logicians represent it, it is not instructive. I know as much of the subject at the beginning of my reasoning as at the end. I have transformed words into other words ; I have been moving without gaining ground.

Now this cannot be the case ; for, in fact, reasoning does teach us new truths. I learn a new truth when I discover that Prince Albert is mortal, and I discover it by dint of reasoning ; for, since he is still alive, I cannot have learnt it by direct observation. Thus logicians are

mistaken; and beyond the scholastic theory of syllogism, which reduces reasoning to substitutions of words, we must look for a positive theory of proof, which shall explain how it is that, by the process of reasoning, we discover facts.

For this purpose, it is sufficient to observe, that general propositions are not the true proof of particular propositions. They seem so, but are not. It is not from the mortality of all men that I conclude Prince Albert to be mortal ; the premises are elsewhere, and in the background. The general proposition is but a memento, a sort of abbreviative register, to which I have consigned the fruit of my experience. This memento may be regarded as a notebook to which we refer to refresh our memory ; but it is not from the book that we draw our knowledge, but from the objects which we have seen. My memento is valuable only for the facts which it recalls. My general proposition has no value except for the particular facts which it sums up.

The mortality of John, Thomas, and company is, after all, the whole evidence we have for the mortality of the Duke of Wellington. Not one iota is added to the proof by interpolating a general proposition. Since the individual cases are all the evidence we can possess, evidence which no logical form into which we choose to throw it can make greater than it is ; and since that evidence is either sufficient in itself, or, if insufficient for the one purpose, cannot be sufficient for the other ; I am unable to see why we should be forbidden to take the shortest cut from these sufficient premises to the conclusion, and constrained to travel the "high priori road" by the arbitrary fiat of logicians.

The true reason which makes us believe that Prince Albert will die is, that his ancestors, and our ancestors, and all the other persons who were their contemporaries, are dead. These facts are the true

premises of our reasoning. It is from them that we have drawn the general proposition ; they have taught us its scope and truth ; it confines itself to mentioning them in a shorter form ; it receives its whole substance from them ; they act by it and through it, to lead us to the conclusion to which it seems to give rise. It is only their representative, and on occasion they do without it. Children, ignorant people, animals know that the sun will rise, that water will drown them, that fire will burn them, without employing this general proposition. They reason, and we reason, too, not from the general to the particular, but from particular to particular :

All inference is from particulars to particulars : General propositions are merely registers of such inferences already made, and short formulae for making more : The major premiss of a syllogism, consequently, is a formula of this description : and the conclusion is not an inference drawn from the formula, but an inference drawn according to the formula : the real logical antecedent, or premisses, being the particular facts from which the general proposition was collected by induction. Those facts, and the individual instances which supplied them, may have been forgotten ; but a record remains, not indeed descriptive of the facts themselves, but showing how those cases may be distinguished respecting which the facts, when known, were considered to warrant a given inference. According to the indications of this record we draw our conclusion ; which is, to all intents and purposes, a conclusion from the forgotten facts. For this it is essential that we should read the record correctly : and the rules of the syllogism are a set of precautions to ensure our doing so.

[If we had sufficiently capacious memories, and a sufficient power of maintaining order among a huge mass of details, the reasoning could go on without any general propositions ; they are mere formulas for inferring particulars from particulars.]

Here, as before, logicians are mistaken : they gave the highest place to verbal operations, and left the really fruitful operations in the background. They gave the preference to words over facts. They carried on the nominalism of the Middle Ages. They mistook the explanation of names for the nature of things, and the transformation of ideas for the progress of the mind. It is for us to overturn this order in logic, as we have overturned it in science, to exalt particular and instructive facts, and to give them in our theories that superiority and importance which our practice has conferred upon them for three centuries past.

Mill's Logic, i. 211; i 218. Ibid. i. 240.

VI.

There remains a kind of philosophical fortress in which the Idealists have taken refuge. At the origin of all proof are Axioms, from which all proofs are derived. Two straight lines cannot enclose a space ; two things, equal to a third, are equal to one another ; if equals be added to equals, the wholes are equal. These are instructive propositions, for they express, not the meanings of words, but the relations of things.

And, moreover, they are fertile propositions; for arithmetic, algebra, and geometry are all the result of their truth. On the other hand, they are not the work of experience, for we need not actually see with our eyes two straight lines in order to know that they cannot enclose a space ; it is enough for us to refer to the inner mental conception which we have of them : the evidence of our senses is not needed for this purpose ; our belief arises wholly, with its full force, from the simple comparison of our ideas.

Moreover, experience follows these two lines only to a limited distance, ten, a hundred, a thousand feet ; and the axiom is true for a thousand, a hundred thousand, a million miles, and for an

unlimited distance. Thus, beyond the point at which experience ceases, it is no longer experience which establishes the axiom. Finally, the axiom is a necessary truth ; that is to say, the contrary is inconceivable. We cannot imagine a space enclosed by two straight lines :as soon as we imagine the space enclosed, the two lines cease to be straight ; and as soon as we imagine the two lines to be straight, the space ceases to be enclosed.

In the assertion of axioms, the constituent ideas are irresistibly drawn together. In the negation of axioms, the constituent ideas inevitably repel each other. Now this does not happen with truths of experience : they state an accidental relation, not a necessary connection ; they lay down that two facts are connected, and not that they must be connected ; they show us that bodies are heavy, not that they must be heavy. Thus, axioms are not, and cannot be, the results of experience. They are not so, because we can form them mentally without the aid of experience ; they cannot be so, because the nature and scope of their truths lie without the limits of experimental truths. They have another and a deeper source. They have a wider scope, and they come from elsewhere.

Not so, answers Mill. Here again you reason like a schoolman ; you forget the facts concealed behind your conceptions ; for examine your first argument. Doubtless you can discover, without making use of your eyes, and by purely mental contemplation, that two straight lines cannot enclose a space ; but this contemplation is but a displaced experiment. Imaginary lines here replace real lines : you construct the figure in your mind instead of on paper : your imagination fulfils the office of a diagram on paper: you trust to it as you trust to the diagram, and it is as good as the other ; for in regard to figures and lines the imagination exactly reproduces the sensation. What you have seen with your eyes open, you will see again exactly the same a minute afterwards with your eyes closed ;

and you can study geometrical properties transferred to the field of mental vision, as accurately as if they existed in the field of actual sight. There are, therefore, experiments of the brain as there are ocular ones ; and it is after just such an experiment that you deny to two straight lines, indefinitely prolonged, the property of enclosing a space. You need not for this purpose pursue them to infinity, you need only transfer yourself in imagination to the point where they converge, and there you have the impression of a bent line, that is, of one which ceases to be straight. Your presence there in imagination takes the place of an actual presence ; you can affirm by it what you affirmed by your actual presence, and as positively. The first is only the second in a more commodious form, with greater flexibility and scope. It is like using a telescope instead of the naked eye; the revelations of the telescope are propositions of experience; so are those of the imagination.

[For though, in order actually to see that two given lines never meet, it would be necessary to follow them to infinity ; yet without doing so we may know that if they ever do meet, or if, after diverging from one another, they begin again to approach, this must take place not at an infinite, but at a finite distance. Supposing, therefore, such to be the case, we can transport ourselves thither in imagination, and can frame a mental image of the appearance which one or both of the lines must present at that point, which we may rely on as being precisely similar to the reality. Now, whether we fix our contemplation upon this imaginary picture, or call to mind the generalizations we have had occasion to make from former ocular observation, we learn by the evidence of experience, that a line which, after diverging from another straight line, begins to approach to it, produces the impression on our senses which we describe by the expression "a bent line," not by the expression "a straight line." — Mill's Logic, i. 364.]

As to the argument which distinguishes axioms from propositions of experience under the pretext that the contraries of the latter are conceivable, while the contraries of axioms are inconceivable, it is nugatory, for this distinction does not exist. Nothing prevents the contraries of certain propositions of experience from being conceivable, and the contraries of others inconceivable. That depends on the constitution of our minds. It may be that in some cases the mind may contradict its experience, and in others not. It is possible that in certain cases our conceptions may differ from our perceptions, and sometimes not. It may be that, in certain cases, external sight is opposed to internal, and in certain others not. Now, we have already seen that in the case of figures, the internal sight exactly reproduces the external. Therefore, in axioms of figures, the mental sight cannot be opposed to the actual ; imagination cannot contradict sensation. In other words, the contraries of such axioms will be inconceivable. Thus axioms, although their contraries are inconceivable, are experiments of a certain class, and it is because they are so that their contraries are inconceivable. At every point there results this conclusion, which is the abstract of the system : every instructive or fruitful proposition is derived from experience, and is simply a connecting together of facts.

VII.

Theory of Induction.

[To Sections.](#)

Hence it follows that Induction is the only key to nature. This theory is Mill's masterpiece. Only so thorough-going a partisan of experience could have constructed the theory of Induction.

What, then, is Induction ?

Induction is that operation of the mind by which we infer that what we know to be true in a particular case or cases, will be true in all cases which resemble the former in certain assignable respects. In other words, Induction is the process by which we conclude that what is true of certain individuals of a class is true of the whole class, or that what is true at certain times will be true in similar circumstances at all times.

Mill's Logic, i. 315.

We must first observe, that there is a principle implied in the very statement of what Induction is ; an assumption with regard to the course of nature and the order of the universe : namely, that there are such things in nature as parallel cases ; that what happens once, will, under a sufficient degree of similarity of circumstances, happen again, and not only again, but as often as the same circumstances recur. This, I say, is an assumption, involved in every case of induction. And, if we consult the actual course of nature, we find that the assumption is warranted. The universe, so far as known to us, is so constituted, that whatever is true in any one case, is true in all cases of a certain description ; the only difficulty is, to find what description. — Mill's Logic, i. 337.

This is the reasoning by which, having observed that Peter, John, and a greater or less number of men have died, we conclude that all men will die. In short, induction connects "mortality" with the quality of "man;" that is to say, connects two general facts ordinarily successive, and asserts that the first is the Cause of the second.

This amounts to saying that the course of nature is uniform. But induction does not set out from this axiom, it leads up to it ; we do not find it at the beginning, but at the end, of our researches. Fundamentally, experience presupposes nothing beyond itself. No a priori principle comes to authorise or guide her. We observe that this

stone has fallen, that this hot coal has burnt us, that this man has died, and we have no other means of induction except the addition and comparison of these little isolated and transient facts. We learn by simple practical experience that the sun gives light, that bodies fall, that water quenches thirst, and we have no other means of extending or criticising these inductions than by other like inductions. Every observation and every induction draws its value from itself, and from similar ones. It is always experience which judges of experience, and induction of induction. The body of our truths has not, then, a soul distinct from it and vivifying it ; it subsists by the harmony of all its parts taken as a whole, and by the vitality of each part taken separately.

Why is it that, with exactly the same amount of evidence, both negative and positive, we did not reject the assertion that there are black swans, while we should refuse credence to any testimony which asserted that there were men wearing their heads underneath their shoulders ? The first assertion was more credible than the latter. But why more credible ? So long as neither phenomenon had been actually witnessed, what reason was there for finding the one harder to be believed than the other ?

Apparently because there is less constancy in the colours of animals, than in the general structure of their internal anatomy. But how do we know this ? Doubtless from experience. It appears, then, that we need experience to inform us in what degree, and in what cases, or sorts of cases, experience is to be relied on. Experience must be consulted in order to learn from it under what circumstances arguments from it will be valid. "We have no ulterior test to which we subject experience in general ; but we make experience its own test. Experience testifies, that among the uniformities which it exhibits, or seems to exhibit, some are more to be relied on than others ; and uniformity, therefore, may be presumed, from any given number of instances, with a greater degree of assurance, in proportion as the

case belongs to a class in which the uniformities have hitherto been found more uniform.

Mill's Logic, i. 351. 2 *ibid.* i. 359.

Experience is the only test, and it is all we can have.

Let us then consider how, without any help but that of experience, we can form general propositions, especially the most numerous and important of all, those which connect two successive events, by saying that the first is the cause of the second.

Cause is a great word ; let us examine it. It carries in itself a whole philosophy. From the idea we have of Cause depend all our notions of nature. To give a new idea of Causation is to transform human thought ; and we shall see how Mill, like Hume and Comte, but better than them, has put this idea into a new shape.

What is a cause ? When Mill says that the contact of iron with moist air produces rust, or that heat dilates bodies, he does not speak of the mysterious bond by which metaphysicians connect cause and effect. He does not busy himself with the intimate force and generative virtue which certain philosophers insert between the thing producing and the product. Mill says :

The only notion of a cause, which the theory of induction requires, is such a notion as can be gained from experience. The Law of Causation, the recognition of which is the main pillar of inductive science, is but the familiar truth, that invariability of succession is found by observation to obtain between every fact in nature and some other fact which has preceded it ; independently of all consideration respecting the ulterior mode of production of phenomena, and of every other question regarding the nature of "Things in themselves."

No other foundation underlies these two expressions. We mean simply that everywhere, always, the contact of iron with the moist air will be followed by the appearance of rust ; the application of heat by the dilatation of bodies : The real cause, is the whole of these antecedents.

There is no scientific foundation for distinguishing between the cause of a phenomenon and the conditions of its happening. . . The distinction drawn between the patient and the agent is purely verbal.

The cause, then, philosophically speaking, is the sum total of the conditions, positive and negative, taken together ; the whole of the contingencies of every description, which being realised, the consequent invariably follows.

Mill's Logic, i. 360. Ibid. i. 365. Ibid. 1. 372.

Much argument has been expended on the word necessary :

If there be any meaning which confessedly belongs to the term necessity, it is unconditionalness. That which is necessary, that which must be, means that which will be, whatever supposition we may make in regard to all other things.

This is all we mean when we assert that the notion of cause includes the notion of necessity. We mean that the antecedent is sufficient and complete, that there is no need to suppose any additional antecedent, that it contains all requisite conditions, and that no other condition need exist. To follow unconditionally, then, is the whole notion of cause and effect. We have none else. Philosophers are mistaken when they discover in our will a different type of causation, and declare it an example of efficient cause in act and in exercise. We see nothing of the kind, but there, as elsewhere, we find only continuous successions.

We do not see a fact engendering another fact, but a fact accompanying another. "Our will," says Mill, "produces our bodily actions as cold produces ice, or as a spark produces an explosion of gunpowder." There is here, as elsewhere, an antecedent, the resolution or state of mind, and a consequent, the effort or physical sensation. Experience connects them, and enables us to foresee that the effort will follow the resolution, as it enables us to foresee that the explosion of gunpowder will follow the contact of the spark. Let us then have done with all these psychological illusions, and seek only, under the names of cause and effect, for phenomena which form pairs without exception or condition.

Now, to establish these connections of phenomena. Mill discovers four methods, and only four, — namely, the Methods of Agreement, of Difference, of Residues, of Concomitant variations.

Method of Agreement.

If we take fifty crucibles of molten matter and let them cool, and fifty solutions and let them evaporate, all will crystallize. Sulphur, sugar, alum, salt — substances, temperatures, circumstances — all are as different as they can be. We find one, and only one, common fact — the change from the liquid to the solid state — and conclude, therefore, that this change is the invariable antecedent of crystallization. Here we have an example of the Method of Agreement.

Its canon is : —

If two or more instances of the phenomenon under investigation have only one circumstance in common, the circumstance in which alone all the instances agree, is the cause (or effect) of the given phenomenon. — Mill's Logic i. 422,

Method of Difference,

A bird in the air breathes ; plunged into carbonic acid gas, it ceases to breathe. In other words, in the second case, suffocation ensues. In other respects the two cases are as similar as possible, since we have the same bird in both, and they take place in immediate succession. They differ only in the circumstance of immersion in carbonic acid gas being substituted for immersion in the atmosphere, and we conclude that this circumstance is invariably followed by suffocation.

The Method of Difference is here employed. Its canon is : —

II. If an instance in which the phenomenon under investigation occurs, and an instance in which it does not occur, have every circumstance in common save one, that one occurring only in the former ; the circumstance in which alone the two instances differ, is the effect, or the cause, or a necessary part of the cause, of the phenomenon. — Mill's Logic, i. 423.

A combination of these methods is sometimes employed, and is termed the Indirect Method of Difference, or the Joint Method of Agreement and Difference. It is, in fact, a double employment of the Method of Agreement, first applying that method to instances in which the phenomenon in question occurs, and then to instances in which it does not occur.

The following is its canon : —

If two or more instances in which the phenomenon occurs have only one circumstance in common, while two or more instances in which it does not occur have nothing in common, save the absence of that circumstance ; the circumstance in which alone the two sets of

instances differ, is the effect, or the cause, or a necessary part of the cause, of the phenomenon. — Mill's Logic, i. 429.

The Method of Residues,

If we take two groups — one of antecedents and one of consequents — and can succeed in connecting by previous investigations all the antecedents but one to their respective consequents, and all the consequents but one to their respective antecedents, we conclude that the remaining antecedent is connected to the remaining consequent.

For example, scientific men had calculated what ought to be the velocity of sound according to the laws of the propagation of sonorous waves, but found that a sound actually travelled quicker than their calculations had indicated. This surplus or residue of speed was a consequent for which an antecedent had to be found. Laplace discovered the antecedent in the heat developed by the condensation of each sonorous wave, and this new element, when introduced into the calculation, rendered it perfectly accurate.

This is an example of the Method of Residues,
the canon of which is as follows : —

Subduct from any phenomenon such part as is known by previous inductions to be the effect of certain antecedents, and the residue of the phenomenon is the effect of the remaining antecedents. — Mill's Logic, i. 431.

The Method of Concomitant Variations.

Let us take two facts — as the presence of the earth and the oscillation of the pendulum, or again the presence of the moon and the flow of the tide. To connect these phenomena directly, we should

have to suppress the first of them, and see if this suppression would occasion the stoppage of the second. Now, in both instances, such suppression is impossible. So we employ an indirect means of connecting the phenomena. to effect the solution, we must eliminate, that is, exclude those antecedents which are not connected with the consequent we are considering. But as we cannot exclude them effectually, and as in nature the pair of phenomena we are seeking is always surrounded with circumstances, we collect various cases, which by their diversity enable the mind to lop off these circumstances, and to discover the pair of phenomena distinctly. In short, we can only perform induction by discovering pairs of phenomena : we form these only by isolation ; we isolate only by means of comparisons.

We observe that all the variations of the one correspond to certain variations of the other ; that all the oscillations of the pendulum correspond to certain different positions of the earth ; that all states of the tide correspond to positions of the moon. From this we conclude that the second fact is the antecedent of the first.

These are examples of the Method of Concomitant Variations.
Its canon is : —

"Whatever phenomenon varies in any manner whenever another phenomenon varies in some particular manner, is either a cause or an effect of that phenomenon, or is connected with it through some fact of causation. " — Mill's Logic, i. 435.

These are the only ways by which we can penetrate into nature. There are no other, and these are everywhere. And they all employ the same artifice, that is to say, elimination; for, in fact, induction is nothing else. You have two groups, one of antecedents, the other of consequents, each of them containing more or less elements, ten, for example. To what antecedent is each consequent joined ? Is the

first consequent joined to the first antecedent, or to the third, or sixth ? The whole difficulty, and the only possible solution, lie there. To resolve the difficulty, and to effect the solution, we must eliminate, that is, exclude those antecedents which are not connected with the consequent we are considering.

But as we cannot exclude them effectually, and as in nature the pair of phenomena we are seeking is always surrounded with circumstances, we collect various cases, which by their diversity enable the mind to lop off these circumstances, and to discover the pair of phenomena distinctly. In short, we can only perform induction by discovering pairs of phenomena : we form these only by isolation ; we isolate only by means of comparisons.

VIII.

The Method of Agreement, says Mill (Logic, i. 424), stands on the ground that whatever can be eliminated, is not connected with the phenomenon by any law.

The Method of Difference has for its foundation, that whatever can not be eliminated, is connected with the phenomenon by a law.

The Method of Residues is a case of the Method of Differences.

The Method of Concomitant Variations is another case of the same method ; with this distinction, that it is applied, not to the phenomena, but to their variations.

This quotation, and all the others in this paragraph, are taken from Mill's Logic, i. 451-9. Mr. Mill quotes from Sir John Herschel's Discourse on the Study of Natural Philosophy.

[Editor, quoting from 8th edition of the Logic: The present example is described by Sir John Herschel as "one of the most beautiful

specimens" which can be cited "of inductive experimental enquiry lying within a moderate compass;"]

These are the rules ; an example will make them clearer. We will show you the methods in exercise; here is an example which combines nearly the whole of them, namely, Dr. Wells theory of dew. I will give it to you in Mill's own words, which are so clear that you must have the pleasure of pondering over them.

"We must separate dew from rain and the moisture of fogs, and limit the application of the term to what is really meant, which is, the spontaneous appearance of moisture on substances exposed in the open air when no rain or visible wet is falling.

What is the cause of the phenomena we have thus defined, and how was that cause discovered ?

For, here we have analogous phenomena in the moisture which bedews a cold metal or stone when we breathe upon it ; that which appears on a glass of water fresh from the well in hot weather ; that which appears on the inside of windows when sudden rain or hail chills the external air ; that which runs down our walls when, after a long frost, a warm moist thaw comes on. Comparing these cases, we find that they all contain the phenomenon which was proposed as the subject of investigation. Now all these instances agree in one point, the coldness of the object dewed in comparison with the air in contact with it. But there still remains the most important case of all, that of nocturnal dew : does the same circumstance exist in this case? Is it a fact that the object dewed is colder than the air ? Certainly not, one would at first be inclined to say ; for what is to make it so ?

But . . . the experiment is easy ; we have only to lay a thermometer in contact with the dewed substance, and hang one at a little distance above it, out of reach of its influence. The experiment has

been therefore made ; the question has been asked, and the answer has been invariably in the affirmative. Whenever an object contracts dew, it is colder than the air.

Here then is a complete application of the Method of Agreement, establishing the fact of an invariable connection between the deposition of dew on a surface, and the coldness of that surface compared with the external air. But which of these is cause, and which effect ? or are they both effects of something else ? On this subject the Method of Agreement can afford us no light : we must call in a more potent method. We must collect more facts, or, which comes to the same thing, vary the circumstances ; since every instance in which the circumstances differ is a fresh fact : and especially, we must note the contrary or negative cases, i.e. where no dew is produced : for a comparison between instances of dew and instances of no dew, is the condition necessary to bring the Method of Difference into play.

Now, first, no dew is produced on the surface of polished metals, but it is very copiously on glass, both exposed with their faces upwards, and in some cases the under side of a horizontal plate of glass is also dewed. Here is an instance in which the effect is produced, and another instance in which it is not produced ; but we cannot yet pronounce, as the canon of the Method of Difference requires, that the latter instance agrees with the former in all its circumstances except one : for the differences between glass and polished metals are manifold, and the only thing we can as yet be sure of is, that the cause of dew will be found among the circumstances by which the former substance is distinguished from the latter.

To detect this particular circumstance of difference, we have but one practicable method, that of Concomitant Variations :

In the cases of polished metal and polished glass, the contrast shows evidently that the substance has much to do with the phenomenon ; therefore let the substance alone be diversified as much as possible, by exposing polished surfaces of various kinds. This done, a scale of intensity becomes obvious. Those polished substances are found to be most strongly dewed which conduct heat worst, while those which conduct well resist dew most effectually. . . .

The conclusion obtained is, that *ceteris paribus* the deposition of dew is in some proportion to the power which the body possesses of resisting the passage of heat ; and that this, therefore (or something connected with this), must be at least one of the causes which assist in producing the deposition of dew on the surface.

But if we expose rough surfaces instead of polished, we sometimes find this law interfered with. Thus, roughened iron, especially if painted over or blackened, becomes dewed sooner than varnished paper : the kind of surface, therefore, has a great influence. Expose, then, the same material in very diversified states as to surface (that is, employ the Method of Difference to ascertain concomitance of variations), and another scale of intensity becomes at once apparent ; those surfaces which part with their heat most readily by radiation, are found to contract dew most copiously.

The conclusion obtained by this new application of the method is, that *ceteris paribus* the deposition of dew is also in some proportion to the power of radiating heat ; and that the quality of doing this abundantly (or some cause on which that quality depends) is another of the causes which promote the deposition of dew on the substance.

Again, the influence ascertained to exist of substance and surface leads us to consider that of texture ; and here, again, we are presented on trial with remarkable differences, and with a third scale

of intensity, pointing out substances of a close firm texture, such as stones, metals, etc., as unfavourable, but those of a loose one, as cloth, velvet, wool, eiderdown, cotton, etc., as eminently favourable to the contraction of dew.

The Method of Concomitant Variations is here, for the third time, had recourse to ; and, as before, from necessity, since the texture of no substance is absolutely firm or absolutely loose. Looseness of texture, therefore,,or something which is the cause of that quality, is another circumstance which promotes the deposition of dew ; but this third cause resolves itself into the first, viz. the quality of resisting the passage of heat : for substances of loose texture are precisely those which are best adapted for clothing, or for impeding the free passage of heat from the skin into the air, so as to allow their outer surfaces to be very cold, while they remain warm within. . . .

It thus appears that the instances in which much dew is deposited, which are very various, agree in this, and, so far as we are able to observe, in this only, that they either radiate heat rapidly or conduct it slowly : qualities between which there is no other circumstance of agreement than that by virtue of either, the body tends to lose heat from the surface more rapidly than it can be restored from within. The instances, on the contrary, in which no dew, or but a small quantity of it, is formed, and which are also extremely various, agree (so far as we can observe) in nothing except in not having this same property. . . .

This doubt we are now able to resolve. We have found that, in every such instance, the substance must be one which, by its own properties or laws, would, if exposed in the night, become colder than the surrounding air. The coldness, therefore, being accounted for independently of the dew, while it is proved that there is a connection between the two, it must be the dew which depends on

the coldness ; or, in other words, the coldness is the cause of the dew.

This law of causation, already so amply established, admits, however, of efficient additional corroboration in no less than three ways. First, by deduction from the known laws of aqueous vapour when diffused through air or any other gas ; and though we have not yet come to the Deductive Method, we will not omit what is necessary to render this speculation complete. It is known by direct experiment that only a limited quantity of water can remain suspended in the state of vapour at each degree of temperature, and that this maximum grows less and less as the temperature diminishes. From this it follows deductively, that if there is already as much vapour suspended as the air will contain at its existing temperature, any lowering of that temperature will cause a portion of the vapour to be condensed, and become water.

But, again, we know deductively, from the laws of heat, that the contact of the air with a body colder than itself, will necessarily lower the temperature of the stratum of air immediately applied to its surface ; and will therefore cause it to part with a portion of its water, which accordingly will, by the ordinary laws of gravitation or cohesion, attach itself to the surface of the body, thereby constituting dew.

This deductive proof, it will have been seen, has the advantage of proving at once causation as well as co-existence ; and it has the additional advantage that it also accounts for the exceptions to the occurrence of the phenomenon, the cases in which, although the body is colder than the air, yet no dew is deposited, by showing that this will necessarily be the case when the air is so under-supplied with aqueous vapour, comparatively to its temperature, that even when somewhat cooled by the contact of the colder body, it can still continue to hold in suspension all the vapour which was previously

suspended in it : thus in a very dry summer there are no dews, in a very dry winter no hoar frost. . . .

The second corroboration of the theory is by direct experiment, according to the canon of the Method of Difference. We can, by cooling the surface of any body, find in all cases some temperature (more or less inferior to that of the surrounding air, according to its hygrometric condition) at which dew will begin to be deposited. Here, too, therefore, the causation is directly proved. We can, it is true, accomplish this only on a small scale ; but we have ample reason to conclude that the same operation, if conducted in Nature's great laboratory, would equally produce the effect.

And, finally, even on that great scale we are able to verify the result. The case is one of those rare cases, as we have shown them to be, in which nature works the experiment for us in the same manner in which we ourselves perform it ; introducing into the previous state of things a single and perfectly definite new circumstance, and manifesting the effect so rapidly that there is not time for any other material change in the pre-existing circumstances. It is observed that dew is never copiously deposited in situations much screened from the open sky, and not at all in a cloudy night ; but if the clouds withdraw even for a few minutes and leave a clear opening, a deposition of dew presently begins, and goes on increasing. . . .

Dew formed in clear intervals will often even evaporate again when the sky becomes thickly overcast. The proof, therefore, is complete, that the presence or absence of an uninterrupted communication with the sky causes the deposition or non-deposition of dew. Now, since a clear sky is nothing but the absence of clouds, and it is a known property of clouds, as of all other bodies between which and any given object nothing intervenes but an elastic fluid, that they tend to raise or keep up the superficial temperature of the object by

radiating heat to it, we see at once that the disappearance of clouds will cause the surface to cool ; so that Nature in this case produces a change in the antecedent by definite and known means, and the consequent follows accordingly : a natural experiment which satisfies the requisitions of the Method of Difference.

IX.

Deduction.

[To Sections.](#)

These four are not all the scientific methods, but they lead up to the rest. They are all linked together, and no one has shown their connection better than Mill. In many cases these processes of isolation are powerless ; namely, in those in which the effect, being produced by a concurrence of causes, cannot be reduced into its elements. Methods of isolation are then impracticable. We cannot eliminate, and consequently we cannot perform induction.

This serious difficulty presents itself in almost all cases of motion, for almost every movement is the effect of a concurrence of forces ; and the respective effects of the various forces are found so mixed up in it that we cannot separate them without destroying it, so that it seems impossible to tell what part each force has in the production of this movement.

Take a body acted upon by two forces whose directions form an angle: it moves along the diagonal ; each part, each moment, each position, each element of its movement, is the combined effect of the two impelling forces. The two effects are so commingled, that we cannot isolate either of them and refer it to its source. In order to perceive each effect separately, we should have to consider the

movements apart, that is, to suppress the actual movement, and to replace it by others.

Neither the Method of Agreement, nor of Difference, nor of Residues, nor of Concomitant Variations, which are all decomposing and eliminative, can avail against a phenomenon which by its nature excludes all elimination and decomposition.

We must therefore evade the obstacle ; and it is here that the last key of nature appears, the Method of Deduction. We quit the study of the actual phenomenon, we pass beside it, we observe other and simpler cases ; we establish their laws, and we connect each to its cause by the ordinary methods of induction. Then, assuming the concurrence of two or of several of these causes, we conclude from their known laws what will be their total effect. We next satisfy ourselves as to whether the actual movement exactly coincides with the movement foretold; and if this is so, we attribute it to the causes from which we have deduced it.

Thus, in order to discover the causes of the planetary motions, we seek by simple induction the laws of two causes : first, the force of primitive impulsion in the direction of the tangent ; next, an accelerative attracting force. From these inductive laws we deduce by calculation the motion of a body submitted to their combined influence ; and satisfying ourselves that the planetary motions observed coincide exactly with the predicted movements, we conclude that the two forces in question are actually the causes of the planetary motions.

"To the Deductive Method," says Mill, "the human mind is indebted for its most conspicuous triumphs in the investigation of nature. To it we owe all the theories by which vast and complicated phenomena are embraced under a few simple laws." Our deviations have led us further than the direct path ; we have derived efficiency from

imperfection.

Mill's Logic, i. 526.

X.

If we now compare the two methods, their aptness, function, and provinces, we shall find, as in an abstract, the history, divisions, hopes, and limits of human science. The first appears at the beginning, the second at the end. The first necessarily gained ascendancy in Bacon's time, and now begins to lose it ; the second necessarily lost ascendancy in Bacon's time, and now begins to regain it. So that science, after having passed from the deductive to the experimental state, is now passing from the experimental to the deductive.

Induction has for its province phenomena which are capable of being decomposed, and on which we can experiment. Deduction has for its province indecomposable phenomena, or such on which we cannot experiment. The first is efficacious in physics, chemistry, zoology, and botany, in the earlier stages of every science, and also whenever phenomena are but slightly complicated, within our reach, capable of being modified by means at our disposal. The second is efficacious in astronomy, in the higher branches of physics, in physiology, history, in the higher grades of every science, whenever phenomena are very complicated, as in animal and social life, or lie beyond our reach, as the motions of the heavenly bodies and the changes of the atmosphere. When the proper method is not employed, science is at a stand-still : when it is employed, science progresses. Here lies the whole secret of its past and its present.

If the physical sciences remained stationary till the time of Bacon, it was because men used deduction when they should have used induction. If physiology and the moral sciences are now making slow progress, it is because we employ induction when deduction should

be used. It is by deduction, and according to physical and chemical laws, that we shall be enabled to explain physiological phenomena. It is by deduction, and according to mental laws, that we shall be enabled to explain historical phenomena. And that which has become the instrument of these two sciences, it is the object of all the others to employ. All tend to become deductive, and aim at being summed up in certain general propositions, from which the rest may be deduced. The less numerous these propositions are, the more science advances. The fewer suppositions and postulates a science requires, the more perfect it has become. Such a reduction is its final condition. Astronomy, acoustics, optics, present us models. We shall know nature when we shall have deduced her millions of facts from two or three laws.

Mill's Logic, ii. 4.

See chapter 9, book vi. v. 2, 478, on The Physical or Concrete Deductive Method as applied to Sociology ; and chapter 13, book iii., for explanations, after Liebig, of Decomposition, Respiration, the Action of Poisons, etc. A whole book is devoted to the logic of the moral sciences ; I know no better treatise on the subject.

I venture to say that the theory which you have just heard is perfect. I have omitted several of its characteristics, but you have seen enough to recognise that induction has nowhere been explained in so complete and precise a manner, with such an abundance of fine and just distinctions, with such extensive and exact applications, with such a knowledge of effectual practice and acquired discoveries, with so complete an exclusion of metaphysical principles and arbitrary suppositions, and in a spirit more in conformity with the rigorous procedure of modern experimental science.

There exists in nature a number of Permanent Causes, which have subsisted ever since the human race has been in existence, and for

an indefinite and probably an enormous length of time previous. The sun, the earth, and planets, with their various constituents, air, water, and the other distinguishable substances, whether simple or compound, of which nature is made up, are such Permanent Causes. They have existed, and the effects or consequences which they were fitted to produce have taken place (as often as the other conditions of the production met), from the very beginning of our experience. But we can give no account of the origin of the Permanent Causes themselves. — Mill's Logic, i. 378.

You asked me just now what Englishmen have effected in philosophy ; I answer, the theory of Induction. Mill is the last of that great line of philosophers, which begins at Bacon, and which, through Hobbes, Newton, Locke, Hume, Herschel, is continued down to our own times. They have carried our national spirit into philosophy ; they have been positive and practical ; they have not soared above facts ; they have not attempted out-of-the-way paths ; they have cleared the human mind of its illusions, presumptions, and fancies. They have employed it in the only direction in which it can act ; they only wished to mark out and lit up the already well-trodden ways of the progressive sciences. They have not been willing to spend their labour vainly in other than explored and verified paths ; they have aided in the great modern work, the discovery of applicable laws ; they have contributed, as men of special attainments do, to the increase of man's power. Can you find many philosophers who have done as much ?

XI

You will tell me that our philosopher has clipped his wings in order to strengthen his legs. Certainly ; and he has acted wisely. Experience limits the career which it opens to us ; it has given us our goal, but also our boundaries. We have only to observe the elements of which

our experience is composed, and the facts from which it sets out, to understand that its range is limited. Its nature and its method confine its progress to a few steps. And, in the first place, the ultimate laws of nature cannot be less numerous than the several distinct species of our sensations. We can easily reduce a movement to another movement, but not the sensation of heat to that of smell, or of colour, or of sound, nor either of these to a movement. We can easily connect together phenomena of different degrees, but not phenomena differing in species. We find distinct sensations at the bottom of all our knowledge, as simple indecomposable elements, separated absolutely one from another, absolutely incapable of being reduced one to another.

Let experience do what she will, she cannot suppress these diversities which constitute her foundation. On the other hand, experience, do what she will, cannot escape from the conditions under which she acts. Whatever be her province, it is bounded by time and space ; the fact which she observes, is limited and influenced by an infinite number of other facts to which she cannot attain. She is obliged to suppose or recognise some primordial condition from whence she starts, and which she does not explain. Every problem has its accidental or arbitrary data : we deduce the rest from these, but there is nothing from which these can be deduced. The sun, the earth, the planets, the initial impulse of the heavenly bodies, the primitive chemical properties of substances, are such data. If we possessed them all, we could explain everything by them, but we could not explain these themselves. Mill says :

Why these particular natural agents existed originally and no others, or why they are commingled in such and such proportions, and distributed in such and such a manner throughout space, is a question we cannot answer. More than this : we can discover nothing regular in the distribution itself ; we can reduce it to no uniformity, to

no law. There are no means by which, from the distribution of these causes or agents in one part of space, we could conjecture whether a similar distribution prevails in another.

And astronomy, which, just now, afforded us the model of a perfect science, now affords us an example of a limited science. We can predict the numberless positions of all the planetary bodies ; but we are obliged to assume, beside the primitive impulse and its amount, not only the force of attraction and its law, but also the masses and distances of all the bodies in question. We understand millions of facts, but it is by means of a hundred facts which we do not comprehend ; we arrive at necessary results, but it is only by means of accidental antecedents ; so that, if the theory of our universe were completed, there would still remain two great voids : one at the commencement of the physical world, the other at the beginning of the moral world ; the one comprising the elements of being, the other embracing the elements of experience ; one containing primary sensations, the other primitive agents. "Our knowledge," says Roger Collard, "consists in tracing ignorance as far back as possible."

[The resolution of the laws of the heavenly motions established the previously unknown ultimate property of a mutual attraction between all bodies : the resolution, so far as it has yet proceeded, of the laws of crystallization, or chemical composition, electricity, magnetism, etc., points to various polarities, ultimately inherent in the particles of which bodies are composed ; the comparative atomic weights of different kinds of bodies were ascertained by resolving, into more general laws, the uniformities observed in the proportions in which substances combine with one another ; and so forth. Thus, although every resolution of a complex uniformity into simpler and more elementary laws has an apparent tendency to diminish the number of the ultimate properties, and really does remove many properties from the list ; yet, (since the result of this simplifying process is to

trace up an ever greater variety of different effects to the same agents), the further we advance in this direction, the greater number of distinct properties we are forced to recognise in one and the same object ; the co-existences of which properties must accordingly be ranked among the ultimate generalities of nature. — Mill's Logic, ii. 108. 2 Ibid, i 378.]

Can we at least affirm that these irreducible data are so only in appearance, and in comparison with our mind ? Can we say that they have causes, like the derived facts of which they are the causes ? Can we conclude that every event, always and everywhere, happens according to laws, and that this little world of ours, so well regulated, is a sort of epitome of the universe ? Can we, by the aid of axioms, quit our narrow confines, and affirm anything of the universe ?

In no wise ; and it is here that Mill pushes his principles to its furthest consequences : for the law which attributes a cause to every event, has to him no other foundation, worth, or scope, than what it derives from experience. It has no inherent necessity ; it draws its whole authority from the great number of cases in which we have recognised it to be true ; it only sums up a mass of observations ; it unites two data, which, considered in themselves, have no intimate connection ; it joins antecedents generally to consequents generally, just as the law of gravitation joins a particular antecedent to a particular consequent ; it determines a couple, as do all experimental laws, and shares in their uncertainty and in their restrictions. Listen to this bold assertion :

I am convinced that any one accustomed to abstraction and analysis, who will fairly exert his faculties for the purpose, will, when his imagination has once learnt to entertain the notion, find no difficulty in conceiving that in some one, for instance, of the many firmaments into which sidereal astronomy now divides the universe,

events may succeed one another at random, without any fixed law ; nor can anything in our experience, or in our mental nature, constitute a sufficient, or indeed any, reason for believing that this is nowhere the case. The grounds, therefore, which warrant us in rejecting such a supposition with respect to any of the phenomena of which we have experience, must be sought elsewhere than in any supposed necessity of our intellectual faculties.

Practically, we may trust in so well-established a law ; but in distant parts of the stellar regions, where the phenomena may be entirely unlike those with which we are acquainted, it would be folly to affirm confidently that this general law prevails, any more than those special ones which we have found to hold universally on our own planet. The uniformity in the succession of events, otherwise called the law of causation, must be received not as a law of the universe, but of that portion of it only which is within the range of our means of sure observation, with a reasonable degree of extension to adjacent cases. To extend it further is to make a supposition without evidence, and to which, in the absence of any ground from experience for estimating its degree of probability, it would be idle to attempt to assign any.

We are, then, irrevocably driven back from the infinite ; our faculties and our assertions cannot attain to it ; we remain confined in a small circle ; our mind reaches not beyond its experience ; we can establish no universal and necessary connection between facts ; such a connection probably does not even exist.

Mill's Logic, ii. 95.

Mill stops here ; but certainly, by carrying out his idea to its full extent, we should arrive at the conception of the world as a mere collection of facts ; no internal necessity would induce their connection or their existence ; they would be simple arbitrary,

accidentally existing facts. Sometimes, as in our system, they would be found assembled in such a manner as to give rise to regular recurrences ; sometimes they would be so assembled that nothing of the sort would occur. Chance, as Democritus taught, would be at the foundation of all things. Laws would be the result of chance, and sometimes we should find them, sometimes not. It would be with existences as with numbers — decimal fractions, for instance, which, according to the chance of their two primitive factors, sometimes recur regularly, and sometimes not. This is certainly an original and lofty conception. It is the final consequence of the primitive and dominant idea, which we have discovered at the beginning of the system, which has transformed the theories of Definition, of Propositions, and of the Syllogism ; which has reduced axioms to experimental truths ; which has developed and perfected the theory of induction ; which has established the goal, the limits, the province, and the methods of science ; which everywhere, in nature and in science, has suppressed interior connections ; which has replaced the necessary by the accidental ; cause by antecedent; and which consists in affirming that every assertion which is not merely verbal forms in effect a couple, that is to say, joins together two facts which were separate by their nature.

§ 2.

Discussion.

[To Sections.](#)

Abstraction.

I

An abyss of chance and an abyss of ignorance. The prospect is gloomy : no matter, if it be true. At all events, this theory of science is

a theory of English science. Rarely, I grant you, has a thinker better summed up in his teaching the practice of his country ; seldom has a man better represented by his negations and his discoveries the limits and scope of his race. The operations, of which he composes science, are those in which you excel all others, and those which he excludes from science are the ones in which you are deficient more of than any other nation. He has described the English mind whilst he thought to describe the human mind. That is his glory, but it is also his weakness.

There is in your idea of knowledge a flaw of which the incessant repetition ends by creating the gulf of chance, from which, according to him, all things arise, and the gulf of ignorance, at whose brink, according to him, our knowledge ends. And see what comes of it. By cutting away from science the knowledge of first causes, that is, of divine things, you reduce men to become sceptical, positive, utilitarian, if they are cool-headed ; or mystical, enthusiastic, methodistical, if they have lively imaginations. In this huge unknown void which you place beyond our little world, hot-headed men and uneasy consciences find room for all their dreams ; and men of cold judgment, despairing of arriving at any certain knowledge, have nothing left but to sink down to the search for practical means which may serve for the amelioration of our condition.

It seems to me, that these two dispositions are most frequently met with in an English mind. The religious and the positive spirit dwell there side by side, but separate. This produces an odd medley, and I confess that I prefer the way in which the Germans have reconciled science with faith. — But their philosophy is but badly written poetry. — Perhaps so. — But what they call reason, or intuition of principles, is only the faculty of building up hypotheses. — Perhaps so. — But the systems which they have constructed have not held their ground before experience. — I do not defend what they have done. — But

their absolute, their subject, their object, and the rest, are but big words. — I do not defend their style. — What, then, do you defend? — Their idea of Causation. — You believe with them that causes are discovered by a revelation of the reason! — By no means. — You believe with us that our knowledge of causes is based on simple experience ? — Still less. — You think, then, that there is a faculty, other than experience and reason, capable of discovering causes? — Yes. — You think there is an intermediate course between illumination and observation, capable of arriving at principles, as it is affirmed that the first is, capable of arriving at truths, as we find that the second is ? — Yes. — What is it ? — Abstraction.

Let us return to your original idea ; I will endeavour to show in what I think it incomplete, and how you seem to me to mutilate the human mind. But you must give me space ; it will be a regular argument of an advocate.

II.

Your starting-point is good : man, in fact, does not know anything of substances ; he knows neither minds nor bodies ; he perceives only transient, isolated, internal conditions ; he makes use of these to affirm and name exterior states, positions, movements, changes, and avails himself of them for nothing else. He can only attain to facts, whether within or without, sometimes transient, when his impression is not repeated ; sometimes permanent, when his impression many times repeated, makes him suppose that it will be repeated, as often as he wishes to experience it. He only grasps colours, sounds, resistances, movements, sometimes momentary and variable, sometimes like one another, and renewed. To group these facts more advantageously, he supposes, by an artifice of language, qualities and properties. We go even further than you: we think that there are neither minds nor bodies, but simply groups of present or possible movements or thoughts.

We believe that there are no substances, but only systems of facts. We regard the idea of substance as a psychological illusion. We consider substance, force, and all the modern metaphysical existences, as the remains of scholastic entities. We think that there exists nothing but facts and laws, that is, events and the relations between them ; and we recognise, with you, that all knowledge consists first of all in connecting or adding fact to fact. But when this is done, a new operation begins, the most fertile of all, which consists in reducing these complex into simple facts. A splendid faculty appears, the source of language, the interpreter of nature, the parent of religions and philosophies, the only genuine distinction, which, according to its degree, separates man from the brute, and great from little men.

I mean Abstraction, which is the power of isolating the elements of facts, and of considering them one by one. My eyes follow the outline of a square, and abstraction isolates its two constituent properties, the equality of its sides and angles. My fingers touch the surface of a cylinder, and abstraction isolates its two generative elements, the idea of a rectangle, and of the revolution of this rectangle about one of its sides as an axis. A hundred thousand experiments develop for me, by an infinite number of details, the series of physiological operations which constitute life ; and abstraction derives the law of this series, which is a round of constant loss and continual reparation. Twelve hundred pages teach me Mill's opinion on the various facts of science, and abstraction isolates his fundamental idea, namely, that the only fertile propositions are those which connect a fact to another not contained in the first.

Everywhere the case is the same. A fact, or a series of facts, can always be resolved into its components. It is this resolution which forms our problem, when we ask what is the nature of an object. It is

these components we look for when we wish to penetrate into the inner nature of a being. These we designate under the names of forces, causes, laws, essences, primitive properties. They are not new facts added to the first, but a portion or extract from them ; they are contained in the first, they have no existence apart from the facts themselves. When we discover them, we do not pass from one fact to another, but from one to another aspect of the same fact ; from the whole to a part, from the compound to the components. We only see the same thing under two forms ; first, as a whole, then as divided : we only translate the same idea from one language into another, from the language of the senses into abstract language, just as we express a curve by an equation, or a cube as a function of its side. It signifies little whether this translation be difficult or not ; or that we generally need the accumulation or comparison of a vast number of facts to arrive at it, and whether our mind may not often succumb before accomplishing it.

However this may be, in this operation, which is evidently fertile, instead of proceeding from one fact to another, we go from the same to the same ; instead of adding experiment to experiment, we set aside some portion of the first ; instead of advancing, we pause to examine the ground we stand on. There are, thus, instructive judgments, which, however, are not the results of experience : there are essential propositions, which, however, are not merely verbal : there is, thus, an operation, differing from experience, which acts by cutting down instead of by addition ; which, instead of acquiring, devotes itself to acquired data ; and which, going farther than observation, opening a new field to the sciences, defines their nature, determines their progress, completes their resources, and marks out their end.

This is the great omission of your system. Abstraction is left in the background, barely mentioned, concealed by the other operations of

the mind, treated as an appendage of Experience ; we have but to re-establish it in the general theory, in order to reform the particular theories in which it is absent.

III.

To begin with Definitions. Mill teaches that there is no definition of things, and that when you define a sphere as the solid generated by the revolution of a semi-circle about its diameter, you only define a name. Doubtless you tell me by this the meaning of a name, but you also teach me a good deal more. You state that all the properties of every sphere are derived from this generating formula ; you reduce an infinitely complex system of facts to two elements; you transform sensible into abstract data ; you express the essence of the sphere, that is to say, the inner and primordial cause of all its properties. Such is the nature of every true definition ; it is not content with explaining a name, it is not a mere description ; it does not simply indicate a distinctive property ; it does not limit itself to ticketing an object which will cause it to be distinguished from all others.

There are, besides its definition, several other ways of causing the object to be recognised ; there are other properties belonging to it exclusively : we might describe a sphere by saying that, of all bodies having an equal surface, it occupies the most space ; or in many other ways. But such descriptions are not definitions ; they lay down a characteristic and derived property, not a generating and primitive one ; they do not reduce the thing to its factors, and reconstruct it before our eyes ; they do not show its inner nature and its irreducible elements.

A definition is a proposition which marks in an object that quality from which its others are derived, but which is not derived from others. Such a proposition is not verbal, for it teaches the quality of a thing. It is not the affirmation of an ordinary quality, for it reveals to us

the quality which is the source of the rest. It is an assertion of an extraordinary kind, the most fertile and valuable of all, which sums up a whole science, and in which it is the aim of every science to be summed up. There is a definition in every science, and one for each object. We do not in every case possess it, but we search for it everywhere. We have arrived at defining the planetary motion by the tangential force and attraction which compose it ; we can already partially define a chemical body by the notion of equivalent, and a living body by the notion of type. We are striving to transform every group of phenomena into certain laws, forces, or abstract notions. We endeavour to attain in every object to the generating elements, as we do attain them in the sphere, the cylinder, the circle, the cone, and in all mathematical loci.

We reduce natural bodies to two or three kinds of movement — attraction, vibration, polarisation — as we reduce geometrical bodies to two or three kinds of elements — the point, the movement, the line ; and we consider our science partial or complete, provisional or definite, according as this reduction is approximate or absolute, imperfect or complete.

IV.

The same alteration is required in the Theory of Proof. According to Mill, we do not prove that Prince Albert will die by premising that all men are mortal, for that would be asserting the same thing twice over; but from the facts that John, Peter, and others, in short, all men of whom we have ever heard, have died. — I reply that the real source of our inference lies neither in the mortality of John, Peter, and company, nor in the mortality of all men, but elsewhere. We prove a fact, says Aristotle, by showing its cause. We shall therefore prove the mortality of Prince Albert by showing the cause which produces his death. And why will he die ? Because the human body,

being an unstable chemical compound, must in time be resolved ; in other words, because mortality is added to the quality of man. Here is the cause and the proof. It is this abstract law which, present in nature, will cause the death of the prince, and which, being present to my mind, shows me that he will die. It is this abstract proposition which is demonstrative ; it is neither the particular nor the general propositions. In fact, the abstract proposition proves the others. If John, Peter, and others are dead, it is because mortality is added to the quality of man. If all men are dead, or will die, it is still because mortality is added to the quality of man.

Here, again, the part played by Abstraction has been overlooked. Mill has confounded it with Experience : he has not distinguished the proof from the materials of the proof, the abstract law from the finite or indefinite number of its applications. The applications contain the law and the proof, but are themselves neither law nor proof. The examples of Peter, John, and others, contain the cause, but they are not the cause. It is not sufficient to add up the cases, we must extract from them the law. It is not enough to experimentalise, we must abstract. This is the great scientific operation. Syllogism does not proceed from the particular to the particular, as Mill says, nor from the general to the particular, as the ordinary logicians teach, but from the abstract to the concrete ; that is to say, from cause to effect. It is on this ground that it forms part of science, the links of which it makes and marks out; it connects principles with effects ; it brings together definitions and phenomena. It diffuses through the whole range of science that Abstraction which definition has carried to its summit.

[See the Posterior Analytics, which are much superior to the Prior.]

V.

Abstraction explains also axioms. According to Mill, if we know that when equal magnitudes are added to equal magnitudes the wholes are equal, or that two straight lines cannot enclose a space, it is by external ocular experiment, or by an internal experiment by the aid of imagination. Doubtless we may thus arrive at the conclusion that two straight lines cannot enclose a space, but we might recognise it also in another manner. We might represent a straight line in imagination, and we may also form a conception of it by reason. We may either study its form or its definition. We can observe it in itself, or in its generating elements. I can represent to myself a line ready drawn, but I can also resolve it into its elements. I can go back to its formation, and discover the abstract elements which produce it, as I have watched the formation of the cylinder and discover the revolution of the rectangle which generated it.

It will not do to say that a straight line is the shortest from one point to another, for that is a derived property ; but I may say that it is the line described by a point, tending to approach towards another point, and towards that point only : which amounts to saying that two points suffice to determine a straight line ; in other words, that two straight lines, having two points in common, coincide in their entire length ; from which we see that if two straight lines approach to enclose a space, they would form but one straight line, and enclose nothing at all. Here is a second method of arriving at a knowledge of the axiom, and it is clear that it differs much from the first.

In the first we verify ; in the second we deduce it. In the first we find by experience that it is true ; in the second we prove it to be true. In the first we admit the truth ; in the second we explain it. In the first we merely remark that the contrary of the axiom is inconceivable ; in the second we discover in addition that the contrary of the axiom is

contradictory. Having given the definition of the straight line, we find that the axiom that two straight lines cannot enclose a space is comprised in it, and may be derived from it, as a consequent from a principle. In fact, it is nothing more than an identical proposition, which means that the subject contains its attribute ; it does not connect two separate terms, irreducible one to the other ; it unites two terms, of which the second is a part of the first. It is a simple analysis, and so are all axioms. We have only to decompose them, in order to see that they do not proceed from one object to a different one, but are concerned with one object only. We have but to resolve the notions of equality, cause, substance, time, and space into their abstracts, in order to demonstrate the axioms of equality, substance, cause, time, and space.

There is but one axiom, that of identity. The others are only its applications or its consequences. When this is admitted, we at once see that the range of our mind is altered. We are no longer merely capable of relative and limited knowledge, but also of absolute and infinite knowledge ; we possess in axioms facts which not only accompany one another, but one of which includes the other. If, as Mill says, they merely accompanied one another, we should be obliged to conclude with him, that perhaps this might not always be the case. We should not see the inner necessity for their connection, and should only admit it as far as our experience went ; we should say that, the two facts being isolated in their nature, circumstances might arise in which they would be separate ; we should affirm the truth of axioms only in reference to our world and mind. If, on the contrary, the two facts are such that the first contains the second, we should establish on this very ground the necessity of their connection ; wheresoever the first may be found, it will carry the second with it, since the second is a part of it, and cannot be separated from it. No circumstance can exist between them and divide them, for they are but one thing under different aspects. Their

connection is therefore absolute and universal ; and we possess truths which admit neither doubt, nor limitation, nor condition, nor restriction. Abstraction restores to axioms their value, whilst it shows their origin ; and we restore to science her dispossessed dominion, by restoring to the mind the faculty of which it had been deprived.

VI.

[Discussion of] Theory of Induction.

[To Sections.](#)

Induction remains to be considered, which seems to be the triumph of pure experience, while it is, in reality, the triumph of abstraction. When I discover by induction that cold produces dew, or that the passage from the liquid to the solid state produces crystallisation, I establish a connection between two abstract facts. Neither cold, nor dew, nor the passage from the liquid to the solid state, nor crystallisation, exist in themselves. They are parts of phenomena, extracts from complex cases, simple elements included in compound aggregates. I withdraw and isolate them ; I isolate dew in general from all local, temporary, special dews which I observe ; I isolate cold in general from all special, various distinct colds which may be produced by all varieties of texture, all diversities of substance, all inequalities of temperature, all complications of circumstances.

I join an abstract antecedent to an abstract consequent, and I connect them, as Mill himself shows, by subtractions, suppressions, eliminations ; I expel from the two groups, containing them, all the proximate circumstances ; I discover the couple under the surroundings which obscure it ; I detach, by a series of comparisons and experiments, all the subsidiary accidental circumstances which have clung to it, and thus I end by laying it bare. I seem to be

considering twenty different cases, and in reality I only consider one ; I appear to proceed by addition, and in fact I am performing subtraction. All the methods of Induction, therefore, are methods of Abstraction, and all the work of Induction is the connection of abstract facts.

[An eminent student of physical science said to me : "A fact is a superposition of laws."]

VII.

We see now the two great moving powers of science, and the two great manifestations of nature. There are two operations, experience and abstraction ; there are two kingdoms, that of complex facts, and that of simple elements. The first is the effect, the second the cause. The first is contained in the second, and is deduced from it, as a consequent from its principle. Both are equivalent ; they are one and the same thing considered under two aspects.

This magnificent moving universe, this tumultuous chaos of mutually dependent events, this incessant life, infinitely varied and multiplied, may be all reduced to a few elements and their relations. Our whole efforts amount in passing from one to the other, from the complex to the simple, from facts to laws, from experiences to formulae. And the reason of this is evident ; for this fact which I perceive by the senses or the consciousness is but a fragment arbitrarily severed by my senses or my consciousness from the infinite and continuous woof of existence. If they were differently constituted, they would intercept other fragments ; it is the chance of their structure which determines what is actually perceived. They are like open compasses, which might be more or less extended ; and the area of the circle which they describe is not natural, but artificial. It is so in two ways, both externally and internally. For, when I consider an event, I isolate it

artificially from its natural surroundings, and I compose it artificially of elements which do not form a natural group.

When I see a falling stone, I separate the fall from the anterior circumstances which are really connected with it ; and I put together the fall, the form, the structure, the colour, the sound, and twenty other circumstances which are really not connected with it. A fact, then, is an arbitrary aggregate, and at the same time an arbitrary severing ; that is to say, a factitious group, which separates things connected, and connects things that are separate. Thus, so long as we only regard nature by observation, we do not see it as it is : we have only a provisional and illusory idea of it. Nature is, in reality, a tapestry, of which we only see the reverse ; this is why we try to turn it. We strive to discover laws ; that is, the natural groups which are really distinct from their surroundings, and composed of elements really connected.

We discover couples ; that is to say, real compounds and real connections. We pass from the accidental to the necessary, from the relative to the absolute, from the appearance to the reality ; and having found these first couples, we practise upon them the same operation as we did upon facts, for, though in a less degree, they are of the same nature. Though more abstract, they are still complex. They may be decomposed and explained. There is some ulterior reason for their existence. There is some cause or other which constructs and unites them. In their case, as well as for facts, we can search for generating elements into which they may be resolved, and from which they may be deduced. And this operation may be continued until we have arrived at elements wholly simple ; that is to say, such that their decomposition would involve a contradiction. Whether we can find them or not, they exist ; the axiom of causation would be falsified if they were absent. There are, then, indecomposable elements, from which are derived more general

laws ; and from these, again, more special laws ; and from these the facts which we observe ; just as in geometry there are two or three primitive notions, from which are deduced the properties of lines, and from these the properties of surfaces, solids, and the numberless forms which nature can produce or the mind imagine.

We can now comprehend the value and meaning of that axiom of causation which governs all things, and which Mill has mutilated. There is an inner constraining force which gives rise to every event, which unites every compound, which engenders every actual fact. This signifies, on the one hand, that there is a reason for everything ; that every fact has its law ; that every compound can be reduced to simple elements ; that every product implies factors ; that every quality and every being must be reducible from some superior and anterior term. And it signifies, on the other hand, that the product is equivalent to the factors, that both are but the same thing under different aspects ; that the cause does not differ in nature from the effect ; that the generating powers are but elementary properties ; that the active force by which we represent Nature to our minds is but the logical necessity which mutually transforms the compound and the simple, the fact and the law. Thus we determine beforehand the limits of every science ; and we possess the potent formula, which, establishing the invincible connection and the spontaneous production of existences, places in Nature the moving spring of Nature, whilst it drives home and fixes in the heart of every living thing the iron fangs of necessity.

VIII.

Can we arrive at a knowledge of these primary elements ? For my part, I think we can ; and the reason is, that, being abstractions, they are not beyond the region of facts, but are comprised in them, so that we have only to extract them from the facts. Besides, being the

most abstract, that is, the most general of all things, there are no facts which do not comprise them, and from which we cannot extract them. However limited our experience may be, we can arrive at these primary notions ; and it is from this observation that the modern German metaphysicians have started in attempting their vast constructions. They understood that there are simple motions, that is to say, indecomposable abstract facts, that the combinations of these engender all others, and that the laws for their mutual union or contrarieties, are the primary laws of the universe.

They tried to attain to these ideas, and to evolve by pure reason the world as observation shows it to us. They have failed ; and their gigantic edifice, factitious and fragile, hangs in ruins, reminding one of those temporary scaffoldings which only serve to mark out the plan of a future building. The reason is, that with a high notion of our powers, they had no exact view of their limits. For, we are outflanked on all sides by the infinity of time and space ; we find ourselves thrown in the midst of this monstrous universe like a shell on the beach, or an ant at the foot of a steep slope. Here Mill is right. Chance is at the end of all our knowledge, as on the threshold of all our postulates : we vainly try to rise, and that by conjecture, to an initial state ; but this state depends on the preceding one, which depends on another, and so on ; and thus we are forced to accept it as a pure postulate, and to give up the hope of deducing it, though we know that it ought to be deduced. It is so in all sciences, in geology, natural history, physics, chemistry, psychology, history ; and the primitive accidental fact extends its effects into all parts of the sphere in which it is comprised.

If it had been otherwise, we should have neither the same planets, nor the same chemical compounds, nor the same vegetables, nor the same animals, nor the same races of men, nor, perhaps, any of these kinds of beings. If an ant were taken into another country, it

would see neither the same trees, nor insects, nor dispositions of the soil, nor changes of the atmosphere, nor perhaps any of these forms of existence. There is, then, in every fact and in every object, an accidental and local part, a vast portion, which, like the rest, depends on primitive laws, but not directly, only through an infinite circuit of consequences, in such a way that between it and the primitive laws there is an infinite hiatus, which can only be bridged over by an infinite series of deductions.

Such is the inexplicable part of phenomena, and this is what the German metaphysicians tried to explain. They wished to deduce from their elementary theorems the form of the planetary system, the various laws of physics and chemistry, the main types of life, the progress of human civilisations and thought. They contorted their universal formulae with the view of deriving from them particular cases ; they took indirect and remote consequences as direct and proximate ones ; they omitted or suppressed the great work which is interposed between the first laws and the final consequences ; they discarded Chance from their construction, as a basis unworthy of science ; and the void so left, all but filled up by deceptive materials, caused the whole edifice to fall to ruins.

Does this amount to saying, that in the facts with which this little corner of the universe furnishes us, everything is local ? By no means. If an ant were capable of making experiments, it might attain to the idea of a physical law, a living form, a representative sensation, an abstract thought ; for a foot of ground, on which there is a thinking brain, includes all these. Therefore, however limited be the field of the mind, it contains general facts ; that is, facts spread over very vast external territories, into which its limitation prevents it from entering. If the ant were capable of reasoning, it might construct arithmetic, algebra, geometry, mechanics ; for a movement of half an inch contains in abstract time, space, number, and force, all the

materials of mathematics : therefore, however limited the field of a mind's researches be, it includes universal data ; that is, facts spread over the whole region of time and space. Again, if the ant were a philosopher, it might evolve the ideas of existence, of nothingness, and all the materials of metaphysics ; for any phenomenon, interior or exterior, suffices to present these materials : therefore, however limited the field of a mind be, it contains absolute truths ; that is, such that there is no object from which they could be absent. And this must necessarily be so ; for the more general a fact is, the fewer objects need we examine to meet with it. If it is universal, we meet with it everywhere ; if it is absolute, we cannot escape meeting it.

This is why, in spite of the narrowness of our experience, metaphysics, I mean the search for first causes, is possible, but on condition that we remain at a great height, that we do not descend into details, that we consider only the most simple elements of existence, and the most general tendencies of nature.

If any one were to collect the three or four great ideas in which our sciences result, and the three or four kinds of existence which make up our universe ; if he were to compare those two strange quantities which we call duration and extension, those principal forms or determinations of quantity which we call physical laws, chemical types, and living species, and that marvellous representative power, the Mind, which, without falling into quantity, reproduces the other two and itself; if he discovered among these three terms — the pure quantity, the determined quantity, and the suppressed quantity — such an order that the first must require the second, and the second the third ; if he thus established that the pure quantity is the necessary commencement of Nature, and that Thought is the extreme term at which Nature is wholly suspended ; if, again, isolating the elements of these data, he showed that they must be combined just as they are combined, and not otherwise : if he proved, moreover, that there are no other elements, and that there

can be no other, he would have sketched out a system of metaphysics without encroaching on the positive sciences, and have attained the source without being obliged to descend to trace the various streams.

In my opinion, these two great operations, Experience as you have described it, and Abstraction, as I have tried to define it, comprise in themselves all the resources of the human mind, the one in its practical, the other in its speculative direction. The first leads us to consider nature as an assemblage of facts, the second as a system of laws: the exclusive employment of the first is English; that of the second, German. [Die aufgehobene Quantitat.] If there is a place between these two nations, it is ours. We have extended the English ideas in the eighteenth century; and now we can, in the nineteenth, add precision to German ideas. Our business is to restrain, to correct, to complete the two types of mind, one by the other, to combine them together, to express their ideas in a style generally understood, and thus to produce from them the universal mind.

IX.

We went out. As it ever happens in similar circumstances, each had caused the other to reflect, and neither had convinced the other. But our reflections were short : in the presence of a lovely August morning, all arguments fall to the ground.

The old walls, the rain-worn stones, smiled in the rising sun. A fresh light rested on their embrasures, on the keystones of the cloisters, on the glossy ivy leaves. Roses and honeysuckles climbed the walls, and their flowers quivered and sparkled in the light breeze. The fountains murmured in the large lonely courts. The beautiful town stood out from the morning's mist, as adorned and tranquil as a fairy palace, and its robe of soft rosy vapour was indented, as an embroidery of the Renaissance, by a border of towers, cloisters, and

palaces, each enclosed in verdure and decked with flowers. The architecture of all ages had mingled their ogives, trefoils, statues, and columns ; time had softened their tints ; the sun united them in its light, and the old city seemed a shrine to which every age and every genius had successively added a jewel.

Beyond this, the river rolled its broad sheets of silver ; the mowers stood up to the knee in the high grass of the meadows. Myriads of buttercups and meadow-sweet grasses, bending under the weight of their grey heads, plants sated with the dew of the night, swarmed in the rich soil. Words cannot express this freshness of tints, and their luxuriance of vegetation. The more the long line of shade receded, the more brilliant and full of life the flowers appeared. On seeing them, virgin and timid in their gilded veil, I thought of the blushing cheeks and modest eyes of a young girl who puts on for the first time her necklace of jewels. Around, as though to guard them, enormous trees, four centuries old, extended in regular lines ; and I found in them a new trace of that practical good sense which has effected revolutions without committing ravages ; which, while reforming in all directions, has destroyed nothing ; which has preserved both its trees and its constitution, which has lopped off the dead branches without levelling the trunk ; which alone, in our days, among all nations, is in the enjoyment not only of the present, but of the past.

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Postscript

by the editor, Richard Lung.

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Proportional Representation is Personal Representation.

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Proportional Representation is Personal Representation.

The title of this Mill anthology was the whole reason (tho I would find other reasons) for compiling it. Namely, that Mill said Proportional Representation is Personal Representation.

In justifying that statement, it is as well to realise that many "modern" (one of their favorite words) electoral reformers do not realise how much of a blur are their arguments. Reading the original case by Mill reminds of the Miltonic proportions of their fall from intellectual grace.

Mill anticipated and countered the current push for making votes count for a party. The slogan, make votes count, typically counts for little or nothing more than a party. Suppose, then, the electoral system, in which votes, for a party candidate, are made to count for the party, to which that candidate belongs, in a multi-member

constituency. The point of this party vote is that, irrespective of the vote as a personal choice, it may be counted for some other candidate on the party list, without personal sanction by the voters. A party, the voter must choose, makes a party list of candidates for them. The party vote is an indirect election.

Originally, the idea of proportional representation meant what it said. The voters could make their own ordered list of representatives, proportionally elected: a voters list. And not a party list, literally for proportional partisanship, falsely pretending to be proportional representation.

As explained by Mill, “the Hare plan” (nowadays called the single transferable vote) was Proportional Representation as Personal Representation, not merely party representation. The former implies the latter but not vice versa.

So, party list systems are examples of indirect elections. Mill argued against these, on principle, in his chapter, “Should there be two stages of election?”

What is more, party elections know no greater agency than party, reducing the nation to partisan divisions, whether or not the people like that unscientific presumption. Party elections put party before country, as well as party before person.

Some party governments impose this party domination. Others stage propaganda referendums to give themselves a spurious legitimacy. Reducing their country to a tribal feud with partisan elections, professional politicians can avail themselves of jobs for life and cultivate a rhinoceros skin, to go with it.

The totals of party votes determine a share-out of parliamentary seats between the parties. This proportional partisanship is what is (fallaciously) dubbed proportional representation. This usurping, the

vote for party ends, is a spoils-sharing system of conquerors, not an instrument of public service.

Nearly all the worlds so-called proportional representation is the proportional count of a party vote. This is often for a closed list, meaning that a personal choice of candidate is not counted at all (even if offered). In so-called open lists, any personal choice is subordinated to the shares of party votes being matched in shares of parliamentary seats.

Open lists were proposed by the Labour government for the first British Euro-elections. But the Home Secretary had to concede the opposition point that open lists could elect a candidate, on the party list, who even had no personal votes.

After that, Labour governments made no attempt to impose anything but closed lists, with no personal choice of representation, for the British people.

The vote for a party list rests on the assumption of the voters partisan loyalty. The list vote is a case of: "All for one and one for all." The Alexander Dumas story of fights, by The Three Musketeers (or four), may be likened to contests between List Partisans, like the rivalry between Musketeers of the Kings party and the Cardinals party.

The party list view-point compares to the Court with its hierarchy of favorites, beyond the reach of the people. More-over, divine right has descended from kings to parties, the new power to which the courtier, in the common man, defers.

Making the vote for a party denies personal choice but even with only a party vote, the voters necessarily must make a particular choice, or what is the point of elections at all?

In the case of party list systems, a more particular choice happens, when the proportional count is made more proportional or equitable, allowing the election of more parties, in larger multi-member constituencies.

This indeed they do. In fact the more proportional the count, in larger multi-member constituencies with more seats, a greater variety of smaller parties are given the chance of representation. The evidence shows that this is what happens, in countries all over the world, that use party proportional representation.

The supposed camaraderie, of the voters for some party, this assumed partisan loyalty melts away when these alleged partisans are allowed to become more particular in their party voting. For, the essence of choice is to make a particular explanation of ones wishes. And voters tend to make more particular wishes, to more fully explain themselves.

Consequently, the more parties, that there are to share out seats for votes, the less likely any one party to win a commanding majority, and the more difficult for parties to agree on which of their number should form a government.

Again, the evidence shows that this is the case, that the proliferation of parties prolongs government formation, often for many months, and sometimes for well over a year.

An election is supposed to solve the problem of who will govern, by the independent agency of the people, who are governed. But the more proportional the party representation, the less decisive the electoral say of the people in forming a government.

This dysfunction has led to a split in the school of party proportional representation, with the belief that it should not be too proportional. The usual excuse is that arbitrary thresholds, of say 5% of the total

votes, prevent extremist or fringe parties entering Parliament. As it happens, thresholds also prevent moderate or unexceptional parties from entering Parliament. Independently of public wishes, a percentage or so change in the level of the threshold can change which parties, moderate or extreme, are available, as coalition partners, to determine the character of the whole government. This is not democracy, it is a lottery – which can be rigged.

However, the international trend has been for smaller multi-member constituencies, confining party proportionality to a manageably few number of parties, to sort out government formation between themselves, after the election.

Modest sized multi-member systems remain more party proportional than English-speaking countries simple majority systems, in single-member districts. This middle way of moderate party proportionality has been given academic sanction, as “the sweet spot” for electoral system design.

The Enlightenment of 18th and 19th century witnessed a pendulum swing from monarchy towards democracy. The swing has swung back to another kind of oligarchy, in the ascendancy of party. This phase is still under-way. We don't know whether it will end only in some Orwellian nightmare. As classical early chronicler, Moisei Ostrogorski noted, by the end of the 19th century, Independents had disappeared and every candidate had to secure a party nomination.

Despite their loudly opposed policies, Presidents Macron and Trump were such good buddies, perhaps because they recognised each other as outsiders, whose independent wealth alone let them defy machine politics, given a public, pig-sick of the parties.

During the twentieth century, the parties firmly controlled voters and candidates alike, thru the rise of the party list system, on the

Continent of Europe. But, til about 1969, British candidates did not even have their party nomination recognised on the ballot paper. The Labour government was recognising the reality of party domination, in First Past the Post elections, supposedly for a local representative.

Up til 1998, parties were not officially registered, when the "control freaks" of the Labour government first introduced the closed party list system for British Euro-elections.

When I asked an election methods group what was their "standard model", one or two political scientists answered with "the sweet spot" theory of a point of stability for a countrys electoral system. One presented the situation as what political scientists expect of their politicians. That was bravado.

English-speaking electoral reformers have campaigned, since the 1970s, for moving away from the limited choice of the two-party system to a moderately multi-party system.

Typically, this has meant the two-party system assailed by smaller parties to be coalition partners. There are signs this co-option has not quelled voter restlessness for more choice. Eventually 5% thresholds prove not high enough defensive walls to prevent an invasion of new parties into Parliament, with the attendant problem of satisfying their demands before a government can be formed.

Chancellor Angela Merkel twice failed to find junior partners, eventually having to fall back, on both occasions, on a coalition with her main party opponent, to form a working parliamentary majority.

This, in itself, is not necessarily wrong. The logic of democracy is that government should represent all the people, in a Grand Coalition, to borrow the German phrase – but not like that! The point is that it has minimal democratic sanction. The public has little

effective input, either in personal representation or government formation.

Partisan election systems work so badly, precisely because they do not allow the voters effective elections that give them decisive democratic arbitration in the personnel of parliament and the kind of government.

The sweet spot theory of electoral stability is like imagining a pendulum is stable when it is still. A pendulum, by definition, is not still. The party proportional system is like a pendulum that works by swinging between voter wish for more particular choice, which means more parties, and the contrary wish for less parties between them and the choice of government.

The party proportional pendulum swings voters into a contradiction between the representation they want and the government they want. And the agent of this contradiction is that fundamentally people are forced to vote for a party, which over-rides both individual representation and community responsibility.

The party proportional system may be likened not just to a pendulum swing but to a forced pendulum swing, which undergoes the no longer predictable oscillations of chaos theory. That is because there is no decisive democratic arbitration from effective elections. As the forced pendulum tells not the time, so the forced vote for party represents not the people.

This partisan-made dilemma sets individual choice against community decision. Party voting is a two-fold perversion of elections or voter choice. Firstly, individual choice is subordinated to the political group or its manifesto, which means that representation has been superseded by referendum. And representatives are replaced

by tenured party officials, who administer policy decided outside the parliament of the whole community.

This is a fundamental misapprehension of the role of the people in a representative democracy. The general public cannot give an informed over-all decision on any of the many specialisms that are required knowledge for governing a nation. The one thing, in which the general public are all experts, and can give a judgment on, is character. We all have to deal with each other, in our daily lives, and judge who we can get on with. We are fallible experts, but experts nonetheless, in which candidates are best suited to serve our interests. And if we are proved wrong, effective elections provide a remedy to our mistakes.

Preventing the public exercise their distinctive expertise, in a shrewd judgment of character, has governed governments studiously inept choices of election methods. The resulting voice of the nation, Parliament, becomes a ventriloquists dummy. Like the monarch, parliament is reduced to a rubber stamp.

So, firstly, individuals are no longer a realistic choice under party voting. Secondly, higher thresholds are a disincentive to voting for smaller parties. There is a cull on the number of ventriloquist parties allowed to fight over who will control the dummy parliament.

There is a discrepancy there. It begins with changing the personal vote to a party vote, whose basis was the subordination of representation to party proportionality. So, the few in parties, not the people, choose representatives. But then, proportionality was also to be subordinated, to further limit choice, to a few fashionable parties, to make manageable their choosing the government between them.

Party is made king for proportions sake, but then proportion is overthrown for party coalition-formings sake. Proportionality is not the

principle of agreement, that party proportionalists pretend. Just a few of a few parties choose the government. This is the doublethink of curing oligarchy with more oligarchy in elections. Its end game is a dictator.

The only consistency, of this redoubled erosion of voter choice, is a consistent anti-electionism, that goes hand in hand with anti-intellectualism. The sweet spot theory is not a method of elections but a method of delections. The animus of many supposed reformers objections to existing elections is that elections exist at all.

In sum, the sweet spot theory appears to have been discovered as a post-war international trend for ruling parties to cut down on the number of rival parties, by restricting the proportionality of the count. This count already is only a count for party lists. So it is a double deteriorator of the particularity of the vote. Nevertheless, academics, followed by some reformers, have justified the trend as a process of stabilisation, serving as an apology for it, and registering their approbation, with the title, Sweet spot theory.

So, it is timely to remember John Stuart Mill in favor of the Hare system, which (to say no more) recognised, in radical distinction to the sweet spot theory, that law-makers should be accountable to all the people they make laws for.

The sweet spot theorys constriction, of meaningful elections, prevents people making use of an increased choice, from a progressively more proportional count, allowing smaller and smaller parties to participate in parliament. Ultimately, particular choices are down to independent candidates. So the sweet spot theory serves as an apology for stopping people get out of party jail.

In elections, which allow, in the first place, an order of choice for individual candidates, the voters show distinct personal preferences,

amidst the normal distribution of votes, expressing some Left-Right range or spectrum of political opinion. This opinion range can be more or less arbitrarily classified or chopped-up into partisan groupings. And those groupings may ally in curious, if not arbitrary ways.

Thus, alleged partisan loyalty is, in part, a figment or fiction of the degree of particular choice allowed by the electoral system. The most particular choice is for individuals, and some voters are particular enough to prefer individual representatives to indiscriminate affirmations of party loyalty.

It may be that the current hold of partisan elections on mankind owes to an ancestry of humans living in tribes fighting for survival, for many hundreds of thousands of years. In that case, there is no moral question of the rightness of the fight. There is not even the defensive excuse: my tribe right or wrong. The story of mankind working together appears some two or three thousand years ago. Great unifying forces, like world religions have soon fallen into an old tribal pattern of sectarian strife with themselves and each other. Doctrinal differences or a mental tribalism has sought control over mens minds.

The peculiarity of "modern" academic and political ethics of elections is that it is an ethic of no ethics, an anti-ethic. An avowed so-called modern belief holds that there is no such thing as right and wrong in electoral systems, only what someone or other wants, The primacy of ethics is proclaimed. But it is an ethic of personal values, an essentially negative ethical anarchism. That justifies politicians desire to make the electoral rules to suit themselves. As such, this arbitrary rule is what Shelley meant by the autocrat being the chief anarchist.

It is further alleged that people should design their own voting methods, like a fashion statement. Ignorance is bliss. Scientific notions of functional tests and trials have flown out of the window. After all, a new out-fit or rig of a voting system is not answerable to anyone but its modeler. Fashion rejoices in ludicrous novelty. That suits politicians as their own referees.

At the same time, this apparent license is not in possession of the least idea of "the" suffrage as other than "the vote", meaning the spot vote, which is a stub vote or non-transferable vote.

The tribal conflicts of partisan elections are resolved by the (Single) Transferable Voting (STV) system, of which John Stuart Mill was the first great champion. Explanation here is kept short (tho given in some of my other books).

Personal Representation by voters order of choice for individual candidates, equitably elected, makes politicians directly accountable for their actions. Politicians have to compete, in multi-member constituencies, for who are the most preferred candidates in their parties. These primaries within STV general elections threaten the incumbency of careerists. Their self-interest, or just stupid selfishness, has resisted this ability of the voters to prevent opportunists, inflicting grievous injuries on society.

Tho, this power might be strengthened by greater frequency of elections, and giving the voters power of Recall, in case of measures deemed unconstitutional, like the starting of a war.

Constitutional reforms, like a vigorous freedom of information, are needed to guide an effective freedom to elect.

Personal character is tremendously important in politics, where representatives have control over the allocations of vast sums of public funds. And are subject to intense lobbying pressure for

parasitic projects. Peoples judge of character should be allowed full scope to elect the most trustworthy people.

People of integrity know that the truth does not follow party lines. A transferable vote can transcend party divisions to prefer individual representatives of more than one party. This establishes the democratically preferred coalition.

Ideally, government should be the council of all the people, not just the minimal democracy of a bare majority. As Mill said, maiorocracy, the tyranny of the majority is not democracy. And as "J. Stuart Mill" MP explained in his speeches for Parliamentary Reform, representation of minorities by "Mr Hare's system" actually ensures the majority, not the minority, rules. Tho, not unduly but in proportion to its strength in the country.

Note:

This anthology contains a greater selection of Mill speeches than was included, on my Democracy Science web-site, and later in my book, "Scientific Method Of Elections".

A Hansard member of staff said that there were more speeches. At the time, I was unable to find more suitable material. On going back, in 2018, I was encouraged, and inclined to congratulate Hansard on their site navigation.

The extra speeches, I have used here, in the three chapters from historical Hansard, all have a bearing on effective elections.

Mill, the man, the thinker and reformer.

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While the very title of this book epitomises its purpose, as elaborated in the previous section, my research for compiling this work refreshed my memory of the whole man. For, this is not the first time that I have researched his life.

The title work of my fifth book of poetry, Radical!, includes a narrative verse on Mill. Out-of-print biographies were borrowed from the library. None of the three authors of Mills life and thought, included in this Mill anthology, were known to me at the time. Certainly, Holyoake, on Mills working class meetings, would have been a useful source of atmosphere for my Mill monolog.

Holyoake discusses his difference with Mill over the (secret) ballot. All I can add is that, long after this provision, the Conservative cause would ask my tenant grandfather, on polling day, if he wanted a lift to the polling station. But he was always working, at the time, which was no excuse, tho he did not want to be beholden to them. I guessed, as a boy, when I heard him speak respectfully of the Prime Minister "Mr Wilson" (a fellow Yorkshireman) that he probably voted for the Labour candidate.

The point of this reminiscence is that the secret vote did not prevent a tenant being plied with his voting, for who was (supposed to be) looking after his interests. No doubt, Labour, the party of union collective bargaining, had some such gently persuasive attitude to its minions.

Elbert Hubbard, commenting on the cramming of Mill, was much to the point. (Never mind the jocular or flippant American style of the Mark Twain period.) His distinctly unflattering description of Mrs

Taylor jars with the conception of rare beauty that Mill worshipped. We have an arbiter on the question, in her surviving portrait, to which one Mill biographer drew the readers attention with no more than a have-you-seen-it exclamation.

The artist appears to have been firmly of the Mill persuasion. She looks a stunner.

My interest was aroused, in finding the study, by Hippolyte Taine, of System Of Logic. Scientific method has been a preoccupation, since my college days, but I never had the courage to take on this vast work. And I'm too old now to take the necessary time. Of course, there could be no hint of the modern physics of relativity and quantum theory. But there is doubtless a rich seam of knowledge and understanding there.

Approaching two centuries ago, in the 1840s, both matter and mind were a mystery to man. Man looked on nature and himself like the proverbial black box, to which there is no entry. The inside could only be guessed by observing the outside. Thru-out the following century, matter yielded much of its internal workings. In the latter half of the twentieth century, life forms have had their genetic structures mapped. Up to, and since, the millenium, neuroscience has ever more sensitively scanned the brain, in its electro-chemical activities, correlated to the sensations of mind.

All this scientific progress has been a vindication of Mills British tradition of empiricism, with which secondary sources had made me fairly familiar. This does not diminish Taines contribution, especially his critical re-balancing of Mills experimental outlook, with the abstract role of theory.

Mill sees the finding of natural laws from experienced uniformities, as essentially a process of elimination. This rang a bell with me, because, in elections, elimination or exclusion is part of the process

of electing candidates. Indeed, I have written a book claiming that "Science is Ethics as Electics".

Mills highly specialised System Of Logic, from which he never expected recognition, was the foundation of his fame and reputation. Sir John Herschel was among those who endorsed its science. It was a standard university text for fifty years and went thru many popular editions, like railway station book-stall reading, as John Morley said, in his appreciation.

The shocking moral, of Mill the natural philosopher compared to Mill the political philosopher, is that System Of Logic is like a work of antiquity, but Representative Government is still ahead of our time.

Once again, reading about Mill, I could not fail to be impressed how widely respected, in a conservative country, was this "philosophical radical." The term disguises what was, in Mills case, a really honest intelligence. His campaigns were not campaigns, in the military sense, of defeating opponents by strategem or propaganda. That would be the dishonest standard, so typical of politics today.

You only have to read Mill speaking as an MP, in justification of the franchise for women, to appreciate his capacity for relentlessly reasoning away every hole-and-corner prejudice. The psychologist tracks down the obscure urges of human motivation, in exposing why things are not as they well might be.

Nothing could be further from the truth than imagining Mill had some shallow rationalist outlook on human nature or was a naive optimist about the purity of natural man.

It would be a mistake comparable to that other delusion about the Victorians, that Charles Dickens was just a cosy and uncontroversial family story-teller.

Jill Liddington has researched the contributions of "Rebel Girls", from the northern working class, to womens suffrage. Their story thus released from obscurity awakens the sympathy. My grandmother (who politically favored the Conservatives) told my mother that women supported womens suffrage but were afraid to speak out, because of widespread male hostility.

Martin Pugh, writing in Electoral Reform in War and Peace, tries to inject some reality into the campaign history of womens suffrage -- in vain, judging by the 2018 centenary of women first obtaining "the vote" (actually only a stub vote or non-transferable vote, as the political profession made sure). A television channel was even transporting viewers to a surviving red letter box, where a militant suffragette incinerated the contents. This was treated as a historic landmark in womens struggle for political recognition -- rather than a counter-productive act of criminal mischief.

Considerations on Representative Government remains vital for both going back to first principles and for its vivid assessments of mans prevailing failings, that fits strikingly, at times, the infirmities of todays political scene. Mill was no naive believer in inevitable human progress. He understood the strength of the forces that make for social decline. It is just that he was not daunted by them. I was impressed by these writings, as well, because of their apparent formative influence on H.G. Wells. (See my other book as editor, *The Angles Weep: H.G. Wells on Electoral Reform*.)

Like Tom Paine, one could say that his religion was to do good, in the causes he championed. For instance, his letters, quoted in this anthology, show Mill was a pioneer of nature conservation and the humane treatment of animals.

The good causes of the modern world were largely anticipated by Mill, who even called for free-from-smoking areas.

People continued to smoke like chimneys, for the next century or so, until they knew better. As a child, watching the old movies, I never thought anything of people, like miniature dragons, suddenly puffing out grimy clouds.

In the twilight of the cinema, my father would blow smoke rings in the air -- perhaps like on-screen "Red Indians" (Yeah right, Columbus) sending smoke signals across the hill-tops.

Mill, the man, made for good works, suddenly despaired of being a drudge, who could take no enjoyment in life for its own sake. He eventually found consolation in the poetry of Wordsworth, the poet of unpoetic natures, as he described him.

Wordsworth's turn to conservatism was no cause for aversion to Mill. He appreciated and learned from conservatives, such as Coleridge. His radical friends did not always understand his openness to opposing influences.

I learned, from my nature poet friend Dorothy Cowlin, the poetry of mood, which liberates contemplation from concentration. There was some such beneficial effect on Mills spirits.

Ending this postscript on a personal note, I followed Dorothy as a nature poet, no doubt in the Wordsworth tradition. And, in my origins, crossed his path -- literally, before doing so literately!

The other side to my work (of which Dorothy said I was more that way than the other) is in the Democracy Science series.

Election science was founded in the eighteenth century Enlightenment. Fair progress was made thru-out the nineteenth century. The twentieth century revolt of the elites, against democratic improvement of the voting system, must bear responsibility for a lack of electoral invention, in that period.

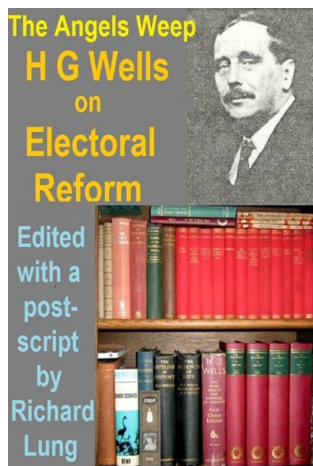
I have since tried to remedy that. A rare advance was made by Meek method STV. This is the basis of my FAB STV (Four Averages Binomial Single Transferable Vote).

The truth of Hare and Mill, that proportional representation is personal representation, is easily proved, as by the “mirage” demonstration (explained in the first part of my book, FAB STV). This postscript is a more thoro-going treatment.

Books by the editor.

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The Angels Weep: H.G. Wells on Electoral Reform



The never bettered reality show of the role of domestic power politics in the misrepresentation of the people.

The Democracy Science series

by Richard Lung.

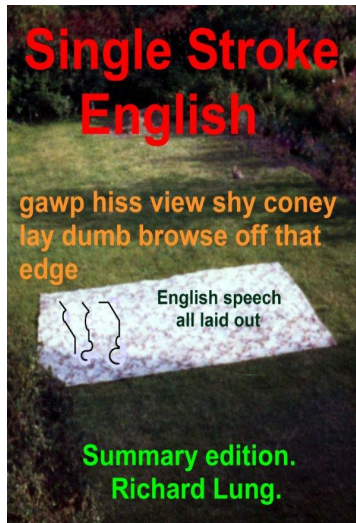
E-books in epub format:

<https://www.smashwords.com/profile/view/democracyscience>

(Peace-making Power-sharing; Scientific Method Of Elections; Science is Ethics as Electics) are available, also as pdf files:

<https://plus.google.com/106191200795605365085>

Single-stroke English (Summary edition)



This is the booklet of essentials for learning Single-stroke English. The essential English letters of the alphabet at a stroke -- so far as practical. More memorable than year-zero shorthands. By-passes the hopeless tangle of English spellings.

The Democracy Science series of books, by Richard Lung:

Book 0:

Single-stroke English (long edition).

Democracy Science, 0.
Richard Lung.



All English speech:
vet ewe tho brown fox high jump
lazy ash dawg

Single-Stroke English

This is the long edition of the English short-hand alfabet, with extra information on making English easier to learn and use.

Book 1:

Peace-making Power-sharing.



Peace-making power-
sharing.

Richard Lung.

Democracy Science, Book one.

The first book on voting method, has more to do with electoral reform. (The second is more about electoral research.)

"Peace-making Power-sharing" features new approaches to electoral reform, like the Canadian Citizens Assemblies and referendums. I followed and took part in the Canadian debate from before the assemblies were set-up, right thru the referendums.

This was a democratic tragedy and an epic in the dashing of idealistic hopes.

Some developments in America are reviewed.

The anarchy of voting methods, from the power struggle in Britain, is investigated. It follows a century of ruling class resistance to electoral reform.

A penultimate chapter gives the simplest way to explain transferable voting, on to the more formal treatment of a small club election.

Book 2:

Scientific Method of Elections.



I base voting method on a widely accepted logic of measurement, to be found in the sciences. This is supported by reflections on the philosophy of science.

The more familiar approach, of judging voting methods by (questionable) selections of basic rules or criteria, is critically examined.

This author is a researcher, as well as a reformer, and my innovations of Binomial STV and the Harmonic Mean quota are explained.

This second book has more emphasis on electoral research, to progress freedom thru knowledge.

Two great pioneers of electoral reform are represented here. The speeches of John Stuart Mill MP on parliamentary reform is a brief selection compared to my later edition, amounting to an anthology. And there is commentary and bibliography of HG Wells on proportional representation (mainly). This is a detailed supplement to my edition of Wells writings on electoral reform.

Official reports of British commissions on election systems are assessed. These reports are of Plant, Jenkins, Kerley, Sunderland, Arbuthnott, Richard, and (Helena Kennedy) Power report.

The work begins with a short history on the sheer difficulty of genuine electoral reform. The defeat of democracy is also a defeat for science. Freedom and knowledge depend on each other. Therein is the remedy.

Book 3:

Science is Ethics as Electics.



Political elections, that absorbed the previous two books in this series, are only the tip of the iceberg, where choice is concerned. Book three takes an electoral perspective on the social sciences and natural sciences, from physics to metaphysics of a free universe within limits of determinism and chance.

Book 4:

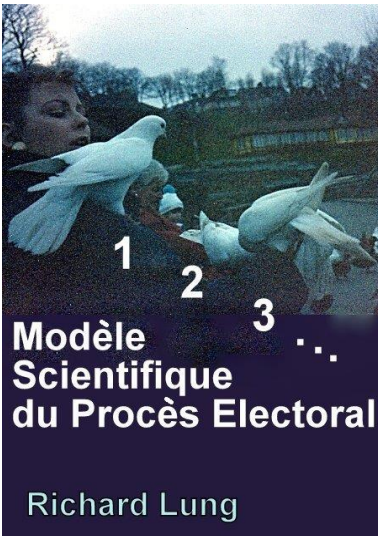
FAB STV: Four Averages Binomial Single Transferable Vote.



General discussions about voting method, in part one. Part two is a technical account of FAB STV. I hope this book will serve as a manual for a project to implement this radical extension of Meek method.

In French/En Francais:

Modele Scientifique du Proces Electoral.



On pourrait considérer le problème de la représentation comme va problème scientifique de mesure. Pour cela, il y a à notre disposition quatre échelles possibles pour mesurer la représentation. L'échelle classifiée ou nominale, l'échelle ordinale, l'échelle à intervalles, et l'échelle à raison.

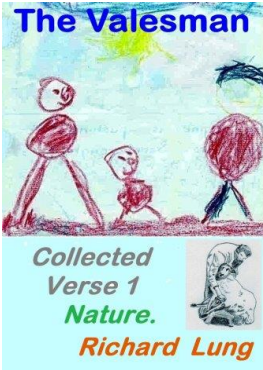
Le scrutin transférable (ST, ou STV, en anglais) est un système co-ordonné du vote au dépouillement, dans un ordre de préférence empirique 1, 2, 3,.. à l'ordre rational de 1, 2, 3,.. membres majoritaires.

Guide to five volume collected verse by Richard Lung

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The following descriptions give information on my other books. My up-to-date books list, with links, can be found on my profile page: [here](#).

The Valesman.



The first volume is mainly traditional nature poetry.
(160 poems, including longer narrative verse in section three.)
The nature poet Dorothy Cowlin reconnected me with my rural origins. Many of the poems, about animals and birds and the environs, could never have been written without her companionship.

The unity of themes, especially across the first two sections, as well as within the third section, makes this volume my most strongly constructed collection. I guess most people would think it my best. Moreover, there is something for all ages here.

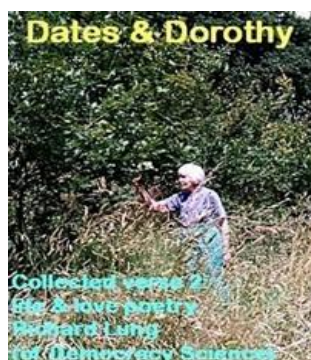
1. How we lived for thousands of years.
Dorothy thought my best poems were those of the farming grandfather, the Valesman.

2. Flash-backs from the early train.
More memories of infancy on the farm and first year at the village school.

3. Trickster.
Narrative verse about boyish pranks.

4. Oyh! Old Yorkshire Holidays. Features play-time aspects of old rural and sea-side Yorkshire.

Dates and Dorothy



Book two begins with eight-chapter review of works, plus list of publications & prizes by Dorothy Cowlin.
(Seven of these chapters currently available as web pages.)

This second volume continues with the second instalment of my own poems, classed as life and love poetry.
The Dates are historical and romantic plus the friendship of Dorothy and the romance of religion. 169 poems plus two short essays.

Prelude: review of Dorothy Cowlin.

Dates, historical and romantic, and Dorothy:

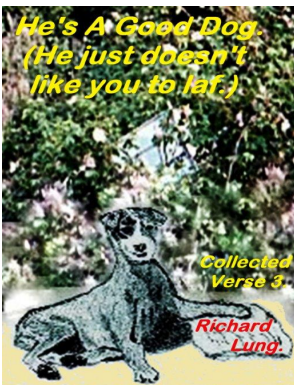
1. dates.
2. the Dorothy poems.
3. loves loneliness loves company.
4. the romance of religion.

The hidden influence of Dorothy, in the first volume, shows in this second volume. The first two sections were written mostly after she died. Thus, the first section, Dates, reads like a count-down before meeting her, in the second section, as prentice poet.

She was warmly responsive to the romantic lyrics of the third section. This was reassuring because some originated in my twenties. (I gave-up writing formal poetry during my thirties, to all practical purposes. There were scarcely three exceptions.) These surviving early poems, like most of my out-put, under-went intensive revision.

The fourth section probably stems from the importance attached to religion at primary school. Here humanitarian Dorothys influence slightly made itself felt by her liking to visit churches.

He's a good dog. (He just doesnt like you to laf.)



The third volume is a miscellaneous collection of 163 poems/pieces, making-up sections, one, three and four, with the arts and politics the strongest themes, as well as themes found in other volumes. There is also a story, and a final short essay.

1. with children
2. or animals
3. never act
4. the political malaise
5. the lost
6. short essay:

Proportional Representation for peace-making power-sharing.

One section includes a sort of verse novela and dramatic poem, set during the Great War. The idea stemmed from an incident related by Dorothy Cowlin (yet again). Her uncle was stopped flying a kite on the beach, because he might be signaling to the enemy battle fleet. In this miscellany, previous themes appear, such as children, animals and birds. Verse on the arts comes in. I organised these poems on the WC Fields principle: Never act with children or animals.

The fourth section collects political satires from over the years.

The fifth section reflects on loneliness.

This volume is classed as of "presentatives" because largely about politics and the arts, with politicians acting like performing artists or representatives degenerating into presentatives on behalf of the few rather than the many.

However, the title poem, He's a good dog..., hints how eccentric and resistant to classification is this third volume. (There are six dog poems in the volume.) This title poem is based on a true war-time air incident. The good dog is also derived from a true dog, whose own story is told in the poem, the bleat dog (in volume 1).

In the meadow of night



The fourth volume is of 160 poems and three short stories on the theme of progress or lack of it.

part one: allure.

The allure of astronomy and the glamor of the stars.

part two: endeavor.

The romance and the terror of the onset of the space age and the cold war.

part three: fate.

An uncertain future of technologies and possible dystopias. Ultimate questions of reality.

This fourth volume is of SF poetry. SF stands for science fiction, or, more recently, speculative fiction. The verse ranges from hard science to fantasy.

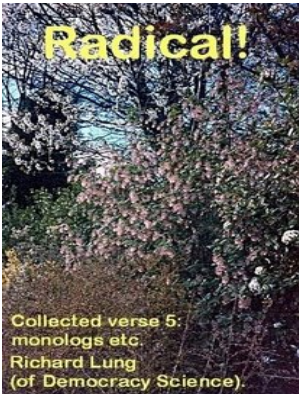
This literary tradition of HG Wells and other futurists exert a strong influence.

Otherwise, I have followed my own star, neither of my nature poet friends, Dorothy and Nikki, having a regard for SF poetry.

Yet science fiction poetry is a continuation of nature poetry by other means.

This may be my most imaginative collection. Its very diversity discourages summary.

Radical!



Volume 5 opens with a play (since published in a separate book) about the most radical of us all, Mother Teresa: If the poor are on the moon...

(Performers are asked to give author royalties to the Mother Teresa Mission of Charity.)

The previously unpublished content consists largely of fairly long verse monologs, starting with artistic radicals, in "The dream flights of Berlioz and Sibelius," which is a sequence of The Impresario Berlioz, and The Senses of Sibelius.

Next, the intellectual radical, Sigmund Freud, followed by short poems on a sprinkling of more great names, who no doubt deserved longer. (Art is long, life is short.)

The title sequence, Radical! is made-up of verse about John Stuart Mill, Arthur Conan Doyle, George Bernard Shaw, HG Wells, George Orwell and JB Priestley.

Volume five ends with an environmental collection, some are early works, if somewhat revised versions of drafts.

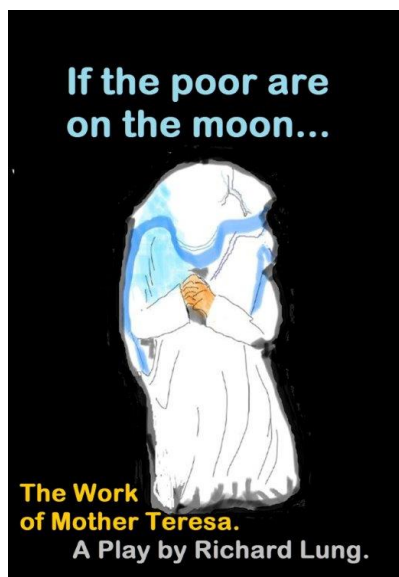
If you read and enjoy any of these books, please post on-line a review of why you liked the work.

*My website: Democracy Science.
has current URL or web address:*

<http://www.voting.ukscientists.com>

While preparing this series, I have made minor changes to arrangement and content of the material, so the descriptions of companion volumes, at the end of each book, might not always quite tally.

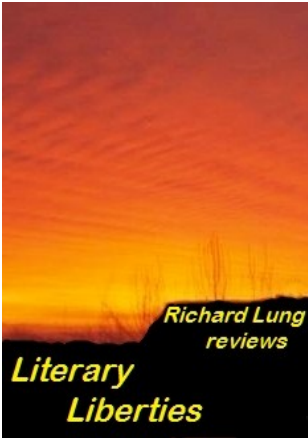
Seperately from "Radical!" the play about Mother Teresa, also appears as a book, on its own, [here](#).



The Commentaries series

Commentaries book one:

Literary Liberties



Literary Liberties with reality allow us to do the impossible of being other people, from all over the world. Our imagined other lives make the many worlds theory a fact thru fiction.

This book of books or illustrated reviews span fiction, faction and non-fiction.

It goes some way to substantiate the belief of Benedetto Croce that history is the history of liberty.

I only wrote of books that I appreciated, so that I could pass on that appreciation to others. It must be admitted that I went with novels that looked over horizons confined to family values. (Family is, of course, a basic trial of liberty, compromised by obligations to partner and children.)

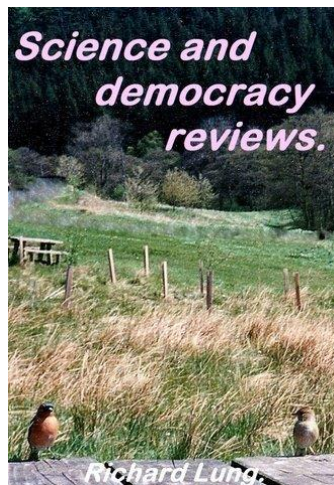
Likewise, these reviews themselves need not be bounded by the horizons of literary criticism but reach out to solutions for the problem novel or the non-fiction book with a cause.

In promoting others writings, I hoped to promote my own, any-way, the liberal values that inform my writings. It took more preparation than I had anticipated. This is usually the case with my books.

Literary Liberties is the first of a series of Commentaries.

Commentaries book two:

Science and Democracy reviews



As they separately pursue their shared ethic of progress, scientific research and democratic reform conduct themselves as two different journeys, both here followed, as the evidence mounts that they depend on each other to meet the stresses that survival poses.

Works reviewed and studied here include the following.

The physicist, John Davidson under-took an epic investigation into the mystic meaning of Jesuses teachings, for our other-worldly

salvation, supplemented by a revelation in non-canonic texts of the gnostics.

The Life and Struggles of William Lovett, 1876 autobiography of the "moral force" Chartist and author of the famous six points for equal representation.

Organiser who anticipated the peace and cultural initiatives of the UN, such as UNESCO.

Jill Liddington: Rebel Girls. Largely new historical evidence for the role especially of working women in Yorkshire campaigning for the suffrage.

"How the banks robbed the world" is an abridged description of the BBC2 program explanation of the fraud in corporate finance, that destroys public investments.

David Craig and Matthew Elliott: Fleeced!

How we've been betrayed by the politicians, bureaucrats and bankers and how much they've cost us.

The political system fails the eco-system.

Green warnings, over the years, by campaigners and the media, and the hope for grass roots reforms.

From Paul Harrison, how expensively professionalised services deprive the poor of even their most essential needs. And the developed countries are over-strained, on this account, drawing-in trained people from deprived countries.

Why society should deprofessionalise basic skills important for peoples most essential needs, whether in the third world or the "over-developed" countries.

The sixth extinction

Richard Leakey and other experts on how mankind is the agent of destruction for countless life forms including possibly itself, in the sixth mass extinction, that planet earth has endured in its history.

Why world politicians must work together to counter the effects of global warming.

On a topic where science and democracy have not harmonised, a few essays from 2006 to 2010, after "nuclear croneyism" infested New Labour and before Japan's tsunami-induced chronic nuclear pollution. There's a 2015 after-word.

Some women scientists who *should* have won nobel prizes. Lise Meitner, Madame Wu, Rosalind Franklin and Jocelyn Bell, Alice Stewart, to name some.

Reading of their work in popular science accounts led me, by chance, to think they deserved nobel prizes; no feminist program at work here.

Julian Barbour: *The End Of Time*.

Applying the Mach principle, to an external frame-work of Newtonian absolute space and time, both in classical physics and to Schrödinger wave equation of quantum mechanics, by which the universe is made properly self-referential, as a timeless "relative configuration space" or Platonia.

Murray Gell-Mann: *The Quark and the Jaguar*.

Themes, including complex systems analysis, which the reviewer illustrates by voting methods.

Brian Greene: *The Elegant Universe*.

Beyond point particle physics to a theory of "strings" that may underlie the four known forces of nature, and its material constituents, thru super-symmetry, given that the "super-strings," as such, are allowed to vibrate, their characteristic particle patterns, in extra hidden dimensions of space.

Brian Greene: *The Hidden Reality*.

A survey of the more extravagant physics theories that have invoked many worlds or a multiverse.

Lee Smolin: *Three roads to quantum gravity*.

Reviewing the other two roads (besides string theory) namely black hole cosmology and loop quantum gravity. All three approaches are converging on a discrete view of space and time, in basic units, on

the Planck scale. General relativity's space-time continuum is being quantised, rather as nineteenth century thermo-dynamics of continuous radiation was quantised.

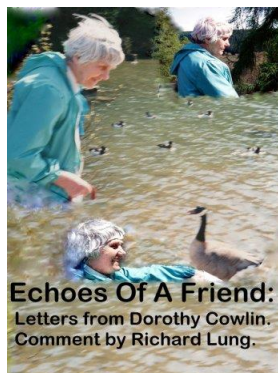
Lee Smolin: the trouble with physics.

Impatience with the remoteness of string theory and hope for progress from theories with more experimental predictions. How to make research more effective. Smolin on a scientific ethic. Reviewer criticises the artificial divide academics make between science and ethics.

Commentaries book three.

Echoes Of A Friend: Letters from Dorothy Cowlin.

Comment by Richard Lung.



"Dates And Dorothy" started with a literary appreciation of the professional writer, traveler, nature walker, and poet, combined with my second book of verse, that includes the story of our friendship.

My second book, about Dorothy, is a memorial, she graces. by speaking thru letters to me, as well as assessments of this writer, she made into a maker and aided as a reformer. In widowhood, she yet became companionable and widely liked. Her quiet and sunny disposition held in reserve a deeply serious nature.

Commentaries book four:

War from War.



Biography of the authors father, in his faraway origins, over-taken by war, on two fronts, and how to confront it!

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